

HISTORICAL INDEX

New York Common Council Manuals

1841-1879

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HISTORICAL INDEX

TO

“NEW YORK COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS”

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HISTORICAL INDEX

TO

THE MANUALS OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

(“VALENTINE’S MANUALS”)

1841 to 1870

CONSISTING OF

TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE
REFERENCES



NEW YORK

FRANCIS P. HARPER

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1900

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BY

FRANCIS P. HARPER.

INTRODUCTION.

THE volumes of the "Manuals of the Corporation of the City of New York," which is the full title of what are generally known as "Valentine's Manuals," contain, besides the statistics and lists of city officers, a mass of "Historical" matter, consisting of extracts from old city records and old newspapers, descriptions of old maps and views, reminiscences of old residents, etc., interspersed with a lot of miscellaneous matter, some of which does not relate to New York at all, strung together without any apparent order or system, just as they happened to come into the hands of the printer. This forms a queer patchwork of rather uneven value, filling a little over four thousand pages in twenty-six of the twenty-eight volumes, of which a complete set consists.

They also contain some 800 illustrations and maps, most of them of great interest at this time, distributed through the volumes with the same disregard of system, and if possible adding to the confusion by having descriptions in one volume while the prints are in another.

To this add a variety of sizes, running through the whole gamut from 18mos to 8vos, the first three being 18mos, the next four 16mos, then eighteen 12mos, winding up with three 8vos; complement this with repetitions both of prints and of articles, and you have a literary mess which it would be hard to equal and which has always been the despair of the student. The only thing in which these volumes maintained an unbroken uniformity is their absolute lack of plan or system.

Mr. Valentine, who is supposed to have edited the "Manuals," was clerk of the Common Council during the publication of all but the last three, and, although an

INTRODUCTION.

amiable gentleman, was not, as is generally believed, a great historical scholar, but gathered what he could find for his books without any very searching investigation as to its merit. Fortunately for him and for us, among his advisers and helpers were a number of very excellent authorities on our old history, such as William Kelby, H. B. Dawson, Dr. Francis, and a few others, to whom their historical value is chiefly due.

During a number of years of a somewhat close study of the older history of the city, I often found the "Manuals" useful as guides, so that I accumulated quite a large number of references to the various volumes, and when a portion of these was accidentally destroyed I determined to go carefully over the whole mass again. The 2325 references which form this index are the result of this second examination. The first column to the right of the page refers to the date of the manual, the second to the pages.

It will be necessary to say that these references are mainly to the subject-matter and not to the long lists of officers which occur there, as most of these can be found in the alphabetical list in the volume for 1870.

Of course the index was made for my own use at the time, but at the request of Mr. Harper, who believed it would interest others sufficiently to warrant him in printing it, I cheerfully turned it over to him and will be well repaid if it serves to stimulate and keep alive that interest in old New York which now seems to be so general.

O. H.

MT. VERNON, N. Y., Nov. 15, 1899.

HISTORICAL INDEX TO THE COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Acrostic for an Addleplate.....	1862, 737
Addoms, Jonas.....	1860, 630
Address of Burgomasters, etc., to West India Co., 1654.....	1847, 373
Address to Washington, Offering Freedom of City, 1784.....	1845, 314
Admiralty Court Proceedings.....	1847, 362-6
Alexander, James.....	1864, 563
Alexander, William.....	1864, 563
Allard, Anthony	1852, 395
Allen, Stephen.....	1863, 625; 1853, 420
Aldermen, Terms of, 1853.....	1854, 398
Aldermen, Presidents of Board of.....	1854, 368
Assistant Aldermen, Presidents of Board of.....	1854, 368
Almanac, 1697, Dedication of.....	1853, 453
Almshouse, First.....	1849, 338
Almshouse, 1794.....	1856, 435
Almshouse, 1796.....	1844, 321
Almshouse, 1797.....	1856, 436
Almshouse, Old, in Park.....	1865, 563
Almshouse, Site for, 1796.....	1856, 436
Almshouse, Governors of.....	1859, 576
Almshouse Department, 1857.....	1867, 445
Almshouse Lottery, 1794.....	1844, 320
American Hotel (Cozzens).....	1865, 555
American Institute.....	1856, 559
Amherst, General, Address of Corp'n to 1760...	1870, 898
André, Major, Will of.....	1855, 554
Andros, Sir Edmund.....	1869, 768; 1864, 564
Andros, Sir Edmund, Appoints City Officers, 1675	1844, 309
Andros, Sir Edmund, Answers to Several Queries, 1678.....	1851, 452
Andros, Sir Edmund, Province Surrendered to, 1674.....	1853, 499
Anne Hoock's Neck, Indians to be Removed from, Anodyne Necklace.....	1844, 310
Anodyne Necklace for Children's Teeth, 1748....	1862, 734
	1865, 824

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Antill, Edward.....	1864, 565
Appointments by "Council of Appointment," 1806.....	1857, 425
Apthorpe, Charles Ward.....	1864, 565
Architecture, Early.....	1861, 521
Argal, Captain, Capture of New York by, 1613..	1868, 864
Arms for Citizens, 1653.....	1845, 346
Arms, Each Citizen to Own a Musket, 1675.....	1845, 334
Army, First Organization of Continental.....	1847, 381
Arsenal, State, on Tryon Row.....	1857, 420; 1866, 603
Arsenal, State, on Elm Street, Built, 1808	1853, 468
Assembly, Speakers of, to 1854.....	1854, 366
Assessment to Pay City Debts, 1691.....	1848, 405
Astor House.....	1865, 547, 555
Astor Library.....	1856, 543
Attacks on City and Measures for Defense	1868, 864
Attorneys Admitted in 1817.....	1867, 791
Atwood, William.....	1864, 565
Auchmuty, Praise of, 1750.....	1866, 617
Aurora Borealis, Speculation Occasioned by.....	1864, 678
Authorities, City, 1857.....	1857, 444
Backer, Jacobus.....	1852, 396
Backer, Margaret.....	1855, 521
Badger Game Practiced, 1751.....	1866, 664
Bag Assistance Co., Mutual.....	1855, 587
Baking and Bolting Monopoly, 1696.....	1869, 854
Bakers, 1686.....	1848, 404
Baker, Gardner, Museum.....	1858, 600
Banks.....	1857, 421, 435; 1858, 612
Banks in Wall Street	1866, 569
Banks, First Savings, 1816.....	1858, 623
Banns of Marriage, 1658.....	1844, 302
Banquet to Lord Cornbury, Bill for.....	1844, 322
Banquet, Coronation, 1717.....	1844, 322
Banyar, Goldsborow.....	1864, 565
Baptism, Woman Imprisoned for "Dipping" a Child, 1674.....	1851, 440
Baptists, Petition of.....	1849, 363, 364
Baptist, Historical Society, N. Y.....	1856, 568
Baptism in Dutch Church Prior to 1697.....	1863, 738
Baptism in Dutch Church, 1697 to 1720.....	1864, 767
Barber and Peruke-maker, An Honest	1866, 638
Barbarie, John.....	1864, 566
Barclay, Rev. Henry, D. D.....	1864, 566
Bark for Tanning, Grinding, Patent for, 1669....	1851, 401
Barracks, The.....	1856, 471

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Barracks along Chambers Street, 1757..... 1856, 428
 Barracks, Upper, 1784..... 1856, 433, 434
 Battery, The.....
 1849, 353; 1850, 448; 1862, 499, 503; 1869, 852, 858
 Battles on Land, Fought by Americans..... 1852, 468
 Bayard, Madam Anne..... 1855, 530
 Bayard, Balth., Purchase 1860, 545
 Bayard, Nicholas..... 1853, 388; 1860, 608; 1864, 566
 Bayard, Nicholas, Elected Alderman, 1784..... 1856, 518
 Bayard, Samuel..... 1864, 567
 Bayard, Stephen..... 1853, 408; 1864, 567
 Bayard Farm..... 1860, 553; 1865, 611
 Bayard Sugar House, Wall Street..... 1866, 559
 Beaver Street..... 1851, 360; 1852, 405
 Bedlow, Isaac..... 1864, 568
 Bedlow's Island..... 1855, 498; 1856, 515
 Beds, Bedsteads, Bedding..... 1858, 499
 Beekman, Gerardus..... 1864, 567
 Beekman, William..... 1852, 382
 Beekman Mansion..... 1854, 554
 Beekman Pasture..... 1860, 539, 541
 Beekman Street..... 1849, 348; 1850, 444
 Beer, Petition to Sell in City Hall..... 1848, 384
 Beer-carriers, 1654..... 1854, 355, 359
 Beer-carriers, Provisional Instructions for..... 1845, 359
 Beginnings of the City, from Valentine's History 1853, 427
 Belcher, John, Visits N. Y., 1747..... 1865, 817
 Bellmont, Earl of 1864, 567
 Bellmont, Earl of, Commission Read..... 1844, 319
 Bellmont, Earl of, Coat of Arms Broken..... 1847, 386
 Bellmont, Earl of, Buried in the Fort..... 1864, 644
 Belvidere Club House..... 1853, 452; 1864, 748
 Benevolent Institutions, 1857..... 1857, 451
 Bestevaer's Cripple Bush 1856, 469
 Bettys, Jos., the Spy..... 1848, 388
 Betrayal of Girl, Judgment for 1849, 415
 Bever Graft, 1677..... 1848, 397, 399
 Bible Society, American, Library of..... 1856, 566
 Bible Society, American and Foreign..... 1856, 566
 Bible Union, American..... 1856, 566
 Bill for Boarding Committee of Court, 1734..... 1844, 324
 Bill for Corporation Entertainment, 1704..... 1844, 322
 Bill for Silver Boxes, 1733-34..... 1844, 323
 Biographies of Public Men during Colonial Era.. 1864, 563
 Biographical Sketches of Magistrates of New
 Amsterdam..... 1852, 378
 Blackwell's Island..... 1855, 496

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Blackwell's, Ward's, and Randall's Islands.....
 1847, 347; 1859, 577

Blind, Institution for the..... 1858, 631

Blockhouse and City Gate, 1674..... 1862, 522

Blommaert, Adrien..... 1852, 390

Bloomingdale Road..... 1862, 518

Boagh, Catherine de..... 1855, 525

Board for Committee of Court, Bill for, 1734.... 1844, 324

Bogardus, Dominie..... 1863, 594

Bogart, Mr., 1806..... 1857, 422

Bonfire on Queen's Birthday, 1703, to be Paid for 1847, 386

Bookbinder, 1734..... 1864, 707

Bookbinder, 1752..... 1866, 719

Books—Charter of N. Y., Published, 1736..... 1864, 724
 Tate and Brady's Psalms Printed, 1753.. 1868, 892
 Watts' Psalms Printed, 1750..... 1868, 891, 895

Book of Forms and Liturgy Published, 1748.... 1865, 828

Books and Libraries in New Amsterdam..... 1858, 503

Booksellers, 1857..... 1857, 452

Boree, The..... 1856, 476

Bosch Bouwery..... 1856, 465

Boudinot, Elias..... 1864, 570

Boundaries of N. Y., 1774..... 1851, 372, 374

Bowery, The..... 1866, 573

Bowery House, The..... 1866, 580

Bowery, No 5..... 1856, 469; 1860, 557

Bowery Village..... 1862, 692; 1866, 580

Bowling Green.. 1849, 348; 1850, 444; 1858, 633; 1862, 526

Bowne, Walter..... 1853, 424; 1863, 628

Bradford, William..... 1866, 711; 1864, 570

Bradford, William (Col.)..... 1864, 746

Bradford-Zenger, 1736..... 1864, 731-4

Bradley, Richard..... 1864, 570; 1866, 685

Brandenburg Deserters Pardon, 1783..... 1870, 786

Braunton's Garden, 1765..... 1856, 466

Brasher, Abraham..... 1864, 568

Breach of Promise Suit..... 1848, 380

Bread, Assize of, 1733..... 1862, 696; 1864, 698

Bread, Quality and Size Regulated.. 1863, 693; 1869, 795

Bread, Prices of..... 1849, 418; 1863, 634, 669, 677, 693

Bread and Flour Monopoly, 1684..... 1848, 403

Breeches, Coat, etc., for Mayor's Marshal..... 1844, 319

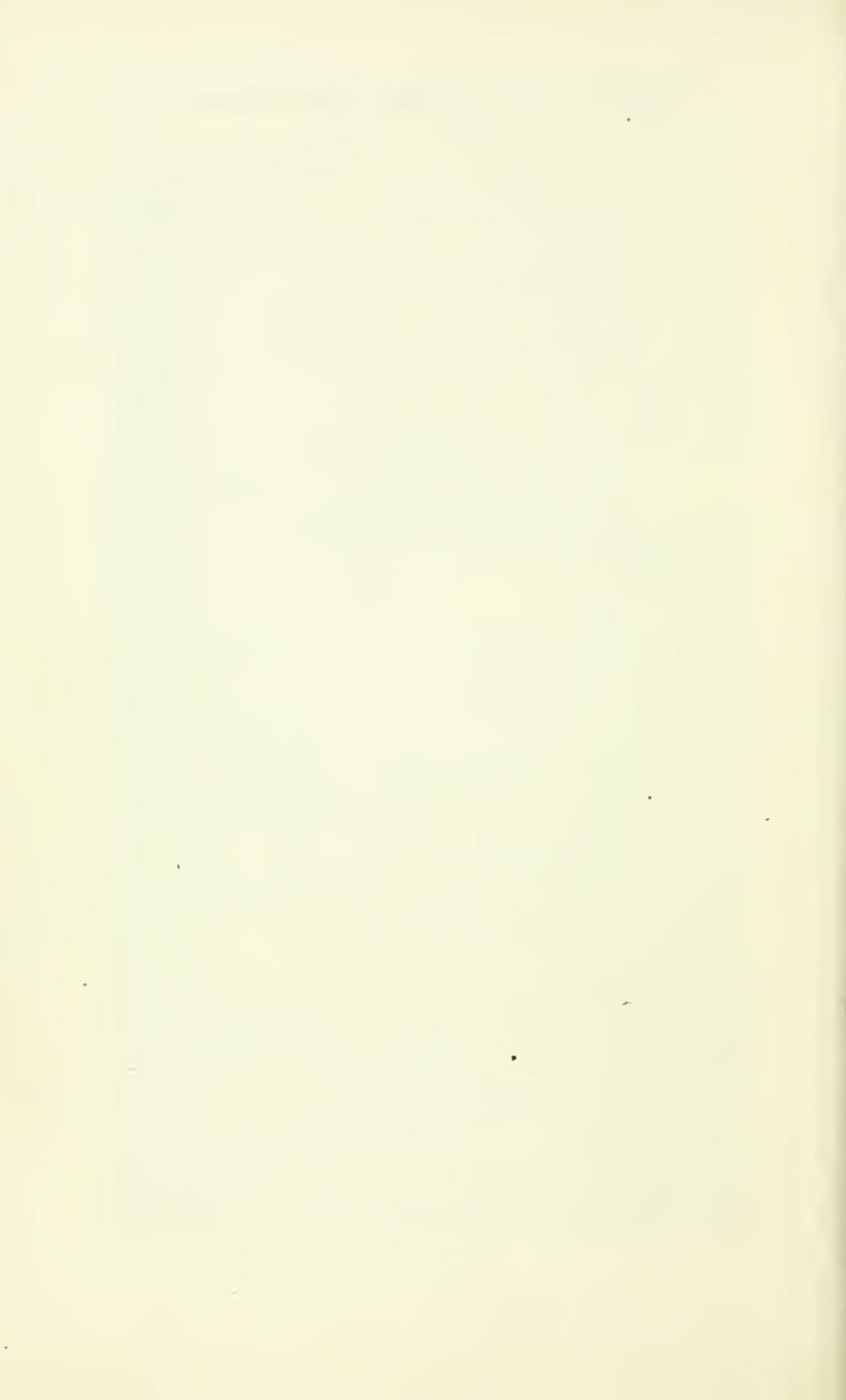
Brewers Shall Not Sell by Small Measure, 1648.. 1844, 296

"Brick Church"..... 1856, 430; 1866, 594

Brick Kilns on "Commons"..... 1856, 427, 428

Brick Yard, 1695..... 1858, 495

Brick Yard along Chatham Street, 1759..... 1856, 428



HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Bridewell, The..... 1855, 486; 1862, 553; 1865, 551
 Bridewell, The, Plan Advertised for, 1774..... 1856, 431
 Bridge Street..... 1849, 352; 1850, 448; 1852, 405
 Bridges, John, LL. D..... 1864, 568
 British Fleet, Arrival of Friendly, 1756..... 1868, 871
 Broad Street..... 1849, 349; 1850, 445; 1851, 360
 Broad Street Graft or Canal in 1659 1862, 515
 "Broadsides," Pre-Revolutionary..... 1855, 482
 Broadway.... 1849, 350; 1850, 445; 1851, 361; 1852, 405
 Broadway below Wall Street..... 1860, 559
 Broadway, Extension through Commons, 1760.. 1856, 429
 Broadway, Grade Established, Duane to Canal
 Streets, 1797..... 1856, 436
 Broadway, History of..... 1865, 507
 Broadway House, Broadway and Grand Street... 1865, 615
 Broadway Modernized..... 1856, 520
 Broadway, No. 1..... 1850, 416
 Broadway, Paving, 1790..... 1856, 517
 Broadway, Petition for Regulating, 1795..... 1856, 435
 Broadway, Sidewalks Paved, 1790..... 1856, 434
 Brooklyn, Indian Deed for Part of, 1649..... 1847, 342
 Brockholst, Anthony..... 1864, 569
 Brooke, Chidley..... 1864, 569
 Brooks Clothing Store..... 1864, 753
 Broughton, Sampson..... 1864, 570
 Broughton, Sampson S..... 1864, 569
 Buccaneers 1857, 455
 Buckmaster, Edward..... 1864, 570
 Burger, Johannes, Recorded for..... 1855, 597
 Buildings not to be Destroyed (British Order,
 1783)..... 1870, 808
 Bull's Head Tavern, Varian's..... 1866, 581
 Bundling..... 1858, 497
 Bunker Hill (N. Y. City)..... 1856, 471
 Bunker's Mansion House..... 1855, 582; 1865, 518
 Burgomasters and Schepens, Proceedings of....
 1844, 304; 1845, 340; 1847, 371; 1848, 376;
 1849, 382; 1850, 487; 1851, 421; 1852, 473; 1853, 472
 Burgomasters and Schepens, Prayer before Meet-
 ing of 1672..... 1851, 421
 Burgomasters Schout, etc., Refuse to Obey, 1673 1850, 523
 Burgomasters Schout, etc., Reconsider and Obey,
 1673..... 1850, 525
 Burgomasters and Schepens Want More Power,
 1654..... 1845, 350
 Burnet, William..... 1864, 570
 Burns Coffee House..... 1865, 513

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Burnt Mill Pond..... 1856, 474
 Burtnett, Daniel, butcher..... 1868, 861
 Business, 1807-12..... 1859, 571
 Byerley, Thomas..... 1864, 571
 Bylevelts Bouwery..... 1856, 469, 473; 1860, 559

Camera Obscura, 1743..... 1865, 752
 Canals..... 1857, 432
 Canal (Canal Street)..... 1856, 435, 436, 438; 1865, 607
 Canal through Roosevelt Street, 1802..... 1853, 467
 Canal Street and Broadway, Bridge at..... 1865, 604, 608
 Canal Street and Greenwich Street, Bridge at,
 1786..... 1856, 434
 Canvas Town, 1776..... 1856, 470
 Capture of New Amsterdam by the English, 1664 1861, 603
 Carpets..... 1858, 500
 Carriages in New Amsterdam..... 1858, 505
 Cartmen, 1673..... 1850, 521
 Cartmen, Rules for, 1691..... 1848, 404
 Cartmen and Carting, 1684..... 1848, 403
 Cartmen to Work for City, 1673..... 1850, 491
 Carting, Prices Fixed for, 1777..... 1863, 654, 665
 Catherwood's Panorama..... 1865, 624
 Catiemuts..... 1860, 547
 Catiemuts Hill..... 1856, 470
 Cattle Market, 1659..... 1844, 303
 Caucus, Minutes of an Old-fashioned.. 1804, 43-310, 44-291
 Cedar Street..... 1852, 406
 Cemeteries..... 1857, 435
 Census of the City, 1850..... 1854, 369
 Central Park..... 1859, 592
 Certificate of Character, 1660..... 1861, 699
 Chairs, Couches, etc..... 1858, 500
 Chamberlain, Duties of, 1857..... 1857, 442
 Chambers, John..... 1860, 609; 1864, 571
 Chambers Street, Origin of..... 1865, 568
 Chapel Hill..... 1856, 470
 Charities, Public and Private..... 1859, 579
 Chart, Mercator's, Drawn by Ph. Cockrem, 1730.. 1864, 676
 Chart and Plan of the Harbor of N. Y..... 1870, 845
 Charter of the City—First, 1629..... 1857, 415
 Charter, Bencke and Evertsen, 1673.. 1851, 413; 1860, 603
 Charter, Nicolls', 1665..... 1851, 412; 1860, 601
 Charter, Colve's, 1864..... 1851, 415; 1860, 606
 Charter (Dougan), Petition for, 1683.. 1844, 311; 1851, 397
 Charter (Dougan), Explanation of Petition, 1683 1844, 314
 Charter (Dougan), Objections to, 1683..... 1844, 314

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Charter (Dougan), Governor Paid for Signing, 1686.....	1844, 318; 1848, 404
Charter (Dougan), Proceedings Leading to Issue of.....	1851, 397
Charter, Warrant to Attorney General to Pre- pare New, 1730.....	1856, 600
Charter, Petition of Common Council for a New, 1750.....	1856, 593
Charter, Report of Committee on Petition for New, 1750.....	1856, 596
Charter Published, 1736.....	1864, 724
Chatham Square, 1812.....	1866, 614
Chatham Square, 1866.....	1866, 607
Chatham Street.....	1866, 590
Chatham Street, Brick Yards along, 1759.....	1856, 428
Chatham Street, Fire in, 1811.....	1853, 468
Chatham Street Named, 1774.....	1856, 432
Chatham Street Surveyed, 1760.....	1856, 516
Chatham Street, View in.....	1857, 548
Cherry Garden.....	1860, 546
Cherry Orchard.....	1856, 467
Cherry Street, Old House, at No. 40.....	1855, 593
Chimney and Fireplace Viewer, 1693.....	1844, 319
Chimney Sweeper, 1686.....	1848, 404
Chimney to be Cleaned, 1648.....	1844, 296
Chimney, Wooden.....	1844, 296
China and Earthenware	1858, 502
Chronological Sketch of the Progress of the City	1856, 563
Church, Council Agrees to Support One Min- ister.....	1848, 378
Church Farm.....	1860, 547; 1865, 547
Church, Lot for, Given, 1692.....	1848, 406
Churches in 1783.....	1870, 787
Churches in 1806.....	1857, 420
Churches in 1807-53.....	1858, 616
Churches in 1857.....	1857, 437
Churches in New York, When Erected.....	1855, 573
Cingel, The	1856, 467; 1866, 542
Citation to Meeting of Council, 1654.....	1845, 363
City Affairs after Capture by English, 1665-72...	1869, 887
City Drummer, Hendrick Obe Appointed, 1673..	1850, 492
City Fathers, Doings in Early Times.....	1848, 402
City Fortifications.....	1862, 519
City Gates to Be Shut at Nine o'clock, 1675...	1845, 334
City Hall.....	1857, 434
City Hall, 1655 (opposite Coenties Slip).....	1848, 384
City Hall, 1665. Encumbered by Salt.....	1848, 384

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

City Hall, 1665, Petition to Sell Beer in..... 1848, 384
 City Hall, 1665, Permit to Lodge in..... 1848, 384
 City Hall, New One Necessary..... 1847, 385
 City Hall, Second (Wall Street).....
 1845, 337; 1862, 537; 1866, 546, 556
 City Hall on Fire, 1747..... 1865, 806
 City Hall (in Park), Foundation Laid, 1802..... 1853, 467
 City Hall, Cornerstone Laying, 1803..... 1853, 469
 City Hall Used First Time, 1811..... 1853, 468
 City Hall, Declaration of Independence Read Near 1855, 472
 City Hall, Ancient and Modern (1829)..... 1845, 336
 City Hall Place Regulated, 1786..... 1856, 434
 City Hotel..... 1865, 539
 City Inspector, 1857..... 1857, 448
 City Judges, 1851-61..... 1859, 494
 City Library..... 1853, 464; 1856, 568; 1865, 803, 808
 City Records, Extracts from..... 1856, 515
 City Statistics, 1653-1870..... 1870, 609
 Civil Officers, 1652. Order Directing Appoint-
 ment of..... 1851, 410
 Clapp's Tavern..... 1866, 578
 Clarke, George..... 1864, 571; 1869, 765
 Clarke, George, Jr..... 1864, 572
 Clarke, Lady, Death of, 1740..... 1865, 748
 Clarke, Thomas..... 1864, 572
 Clarkson House..... 1865, 592
 Clarkson, Matthew..... 1864, 572
 Claver Waytie..... 1856, 471
 Clergy of New York in 1800..... 1869, 789
 Clerks of the City Council, 1653-1835..... 1860, 608
 Climate, 1774..... 1851, 371
 Clinton, DeWitt..... 1853, 415; 1861, 551
 Clinton, George..... 1864, 573
 Clinton, George, Freedom of City to..... 1845, 321
 Clinton, George, Trumbull's Portrait of..... 1845, 323
 Clocks and Watches..... 1858, 501
 Clothes, Cost of, in New Amsterdam..... 1858, 509
 Coats, Edward, Pirate, 1693..... 1857, 463
 Cohabitation before Marriage Prohibited, 1658.. 1844, 303
 Coenties' Alley..... 1852, 403
 Colden, Cadwallader D..... 1853, 419; 1863, 624; 1864, 573
 Collect, The..... 1860, 562
 Collect Pond, Surveyed, 1790..... 1856, 434
 Collect Pond to Be Filled in, 1805..... 1856, 439
 Collect Island Surveyed, 1797..... 1856, 436
 Collector, Balth. Bayard Appointed, 1673..... 1850, 491
 Colsart, John..... 1864, 573

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Columbia College Library.....	1856, 560
Combustibles, 1779.....	1863, 681
Combustibles, Place for, 1762.....	1856, 429
Comedians, 1753.....	1868, 889
Comedians from Philadelphia, 1750.....	1866, 623
Comedians, Punch's, 1749.....	1865, 841
Commerce, 1857.....	1857, 452
Commissions of Mayor and Aldermen, 1665.....	
	1851, 412; 1860, 602
Commissioners of Adjustment, British, 1783.....	
	1863, 729; 1870, 779, 782
Commissioners from Adjacent Villages Called for, 1653.....	1845, 350
Committee of Fifty-one, 1774.....	1855, 461
Committee of Safety, 1775.....	1849, 345
Common Council, 1806.....	1857, 425
Common Council, 1857.....	1857, 444
Common Council, Oath of, 1683.....	1844, 317
Common Council Proceedings, 1684.....	1844, 317
Common Council Records.....	1845, 314
Common Council Sit at House of George Repa- neck.....	1847, 385
Commons Hired Out for Brick Kilns, 1751.....	1856, 428
Commons, No Holes to Be Dug in, or Sod Taken from, 1731.....	1856, 427
Company's Valley or Marsh.....	1856, 469
Comptroller, Duties of, 1857.....	1857, 442
Coney Island, Grant of Land Near, 1643.....	1847, 348
Conference of "Commissioners" from Vicinity on "Situation of the Country," 1653.....	1845, 350
Confederacy (of Towns), 1654.....	1845, 357
Confiscation of Property of Dutch Subjects, 1665	1847, 351
Commercial Marine, 1730.....	1869, 850
Congress at City Hall, 1789.....	1866, 551
Congress, New York Provincial.....	1860, 628
Congress, Speakers of, to 1855.....	1854, 365
Constable, High, Instructions for, 1655.....	1849, 385
Constables Watch, 1700	1844, 320
Constitutions, City Charter, 1857.....	1857, 440
Constitutions, Adoption of, by the States.....	1854, 362
Continental Service.....	1869, 792
Continental Army, First Organization of.....	1847, 381
Conloit's Garden	1865, 548, 600
Conveyances, Old.....	1857, 548; 1861, 577; 1865, 656
Cooper's Combination (Trust), 1680.....	1850, 425
Corlaer's Plantation.....	1856, 467, 473
Cornbury, Lord.....	1864, 573; 1869, 763

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Cornelisen, Duvertie..... 1855, 528
 Coronation Banquet, 1717, Bill for..... 1844, 322
 Cosby, William, Governor..... 1864, 574
 Cosby, William, Governor, Arrives, 1732..... 1864, 693
 Cosby, William, Governor, Death of, 1736.....
 1862, 707; 1864, 727
 Cosseau, Jac..... 1852, 397
 Cost of New Netherlands (Note) 1851, 368
 Council of Appointment..... 1857, 449
 Council, City, Fines for Tardiness at Meeting of.. 1848, 385
 Council, City, Minutes, 1698..... 1849, 341
 Counsels to Corporation..... 1854, 441
 Counsels to corporation, 1830-60 1859, 494
 County Government, 1806..... 1857, 425
 County Government, 1857..... 1857, 440
 County Officers, 1857..... 1857, 442
 Court Fees, 1654..... 1847, 371
 Court of General Sessions, History of..... 1859, 490
 Court of General Sessions, Officers of..... 1859, 491
 Court Proceedings, 1653..... 1845, 367
 Court Proceedings, 1654..... 1847, 376-9
 Court Rules, 1674..... 1853, 483
 Couwenhoven, Piet. Wolf Van 1852, 393
 Cowfoot Hill..... 1856, 471
 Cricket Match, 1751..... 1866, 676
 Criegier, Martin, Appointed Captain, 1659..... 1847, 345
 Crimmashie Hill (Gramercy)..... 1856, 465
 Cripplebush..... 1860, 545
 Croegers, Tryntie 1855, 524
 Croton Aqueduct..... 1850, 268; 1852, 229
 Croton Aqueduct Department..... 1854, 214; 1857, 447
 Croton Dam and Reservoir..... 1844, 290
 Croton Water..... 1857, 434
 Croton Water and Central Park..... 1858, 632
 Crown Point..... 1856, 474
 Crown Point Road..... 1856, 471
 Cruger, Henry..... 1864, 574
 Cruger, John 1853, 406; 1865, 767
 Cruger, John, Diary on Shipboard, 1698..... 1857, 466
 Cruger, John, Jr..... 1853, 409
 Cupboards, Chests, etc..... 1858, 499
 Currency in New Amsterdam..... 1855, 547
 Curtains..... 1858, 501
 Custom House, Old, 1825..... 1866, 571
 Custom House Orders, 1776..... 1869, 794
 Cuvilje, Adriana 1855, 533
 Cuyler, Hendrick..... 1864, 574

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Daille, Rev. Peter	1864, 574
Damen Farm.....	1860, 528
Dances in Olden Time.....	1869, 777
Dancing, 1807-08	1870, 861
Dawall, John.....	1864, 575
Deacon's House.....	1856, 474
Debt of City, Origin of.....	1859, 514
Debt, Imprisonment for, 1788.....	1869, 862
Debts, English Officers' Pay, 1783.....	1870, 810
Deaf and Dumb Institution.....	1858, 631
Deeds and Records to be Returned by British...	1870, 781
Defense of New York against the Slanders of New England.....	1870, 892
Defense of New York, 1814, Committee on.....	1859, 553, 557, 559, 560
Defenses of New York, 1810-11.....	1868, 881, 882
Defenses of New York, 1775-83.....	1868, 871
Defenses of New Amsterdam, 1653.....	1845, 363-5, 370
Defenses, Contributions for City, 1653.....	1845, 340
De Foreest, Isaac.....	1852, 398
De Kay, Jacob.....	1864, 575
De Laet, Johanna.....	1855, 521
De Lancey Estate.....	1866, 584
De Lancey, James.....	1864, 575
De Lancey, Oliver.....	1864, 575
De Lancey, Stephen.....	1864, 576
Delanoy, Mary.....	1860, 596
Delanoy, Peter.....	1853, 390; 1864, 576
Delavall, Thos.....	1853, 380; 1864, 576, 578
D'Lille, Nicasius.....	1852, 392
DeMeyer, Nich.....	1864, 577
Dentist, 1735.....	1864, 714
DePeyster, Abraham.....	1853, 392; 1864, 577
DePeyster, Abraham, Funeral of.....	1861, 568
DePeyster, Abraham, Jr.....	1864, 577
DePeyster, Johannes.....	1852, 380; 1853, 395; 1864, 578
DePeyster, Johannes, Jr.....	1864, 578
DePeyster Family.....	1861, 556
DePeyster House, Furniture in.....	1858, 522
DeRiemer, Isaac.....	1864, 579
Dervall, Wm.....	1853, 384
Description of New York, 1707-08, by John Lam- bert.....	1870, 847
De Truy's Plantation.....	1860, 539
Deutel Bay.....	1856, 473
DeVries Settles in Delaware, 1631.....	1851, 367
DeWitt, Jannetje.....	1855, 533

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

DeWitt, Maps and Surveys of..... 1849, 370
 Dey Street..... 1849, 351; 1850, 447
 Discovery of New York..... 1848, 372; 1851, 364; 1857, 415
 Directory of City, 1665..... 1849, 356; 1850, 452
 Division of the City, Streets, etc..... 1857, 433
 Dock, The..... 1862, 508, 509, 511, 512
 Dock, Tax on Merchants for, 1675..... 1845, 332
 Doctor's Bill, 1788 1870, 904
 Documents, Interesting..... 1856, 570
 Dogs in New York, 1752..... 1869, 892
 Dog-whipper and Sexton, 1654..... 1848, 378
 Doings of Burgomasters and Schepens..... 1848, 376
 Domestic Affairs before the Revolution..... 1858, 493
 Dominie's Bouwery..... 1856, 467
 Dougan, Colonel Thomas..... 1864, 578
 Dougan, Colonel Thomas, Petition to, for Charter,
 1683..... 1844, 311
 Dougan, Colonel Thomas, Report on the Prov-
 ince, 1682..... 1850, 486
 Driesius..... 1848, 377
 Drummer, City, Appointed..... 1850, 492
 Duane, James..... 1853, 410; 1861, 547
 DuBois, Rev. Walter..... 1864, 579
 DuBois, Rev. Walter, Death Notice of, 1751..... 1866, 687
 DuBuc's Plan of Defense of New York, 1808.... 1860, 589
 Dudley, Joseph..... 1864, 579
 Duel, A, 1713..... 1869, 850
 Dugee, Anthony Jos., Slack Rope Performer,
 1753..... 1868, 894, 897
 Dugee, Mrs., Female Samson, 1753..... 1868, 897
 Dunmore, Earl of (John Murray)..... 1864, 580
 Dupuy, Dr., M. D. and Man Midwife, 1745..... 1865, 782
 Dutch Conquest of New York..... 1850, 420
 Dutch Church in Fort, 1790..... 1860, 852
 Dutch Church, Lower, Erection of..... 1866, 545
 Dutch Reformed Burial Ground, 1766..... 1856, 430
 Dutch Descent, Citizens of, 1687..... 1869, 872
 Dutch Who Swore Allegiance to Great Britain.. 1854, 524
 Dutch Houses..... 1857, 416
 Dutch Record, Translation of, 1649..... 1860, 795
 Dutch, Restoration to the, 1614..... 1868, 864
 Dutch Restoration, Appointment of Magistrates
 at, 1673..... 1850, 489
 Dutch, Times of the..... 1860, 612
 Drissius, Rev. Samuel..... 1864, 579
 Drover's Inn 1858, 476
 Dry Goods, Prices of, in New Amsterdam 1858, 508

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Dry Goods from London, 1745	1865, 790
Dyre, Wm.	1853, 387; 1864, 580
Early Suits at Law	1848, 376
Earthquake, 1727	1869, 850
Earthquake, 1737	1865, 738
Earthquake in Boston, 1744	1865, 762
East Jersey Trade Harmful to New York, 1684	1848, 402
East Jersey, Annexation of, to New York, 1684	1848, 402
East River Shore, Improvement of	1862, 527
East River Shore between John Street and Peck Slip, 1746	1862, 531
East River Shore near Rutgers, 1760	1862, 532
Ebbingh, Jeronimus	1852, 396
Ecclesiastique, 1654	1848, 378
Edsall, Samuel	1864, 580
Education, 1807-8	1870, 861
Education, Board of, 1857	1857, 445
Election, 1735	1869, 851
Election of Burgomaster, etc., 1661	1849, 403
Electoral Votes for Presidents to 1852	1854, 362
Electricity, 1748 (exhibition of)	1865, 826
Elgin Garden	1856, 474
Elliot, Andrew	1864, 580
Elliott's, Gov., House	1865, 639
Ellis' Island (Oyster Island)	1855, 498
Embargo in New York, 1807-08	1870, 866
Emigrants, Foreign, 1847-58	1859, 575
Emigration, 1857	1857, 439
Emigration, Commissioners of	1859, 573
Emott, James	1864, 581
English Capture of New Amsterdam, 1664	1861, 603
English, Rumored Gathering of, 1653	1845, 345
English Ships Arrive at Boston and Cause Alarm, 1654	1845, 361
English Pirates, 1654	1845, 358
English Pirates, Prevention of Robberies by, 1654	1845, 353
English Power, Extinction of, in New York, 1673	1868, 865
English, Restoration to, 1674	1868, 865
English Officers to Pay Debts, 1783	1870, 810
Enrollment, Compulsory, 1780	1863, 700
Entrance of Americans into New York, 1783	1870, 825
Estimate for City Expenses, 1800	1869, 860
Ethnological Society, American	1856, 568
Evacuation by the British, 1783	1852, 437
Evacuation, Orders for	1870, 801, 802
Evacuation, Notice of	1870, 785

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Evacuation, Papers Relating to..... 1870, 772
 Evacuation Celebration, 1830..... 1870, 840
 Exchange, Foot of Broad Street..... 1862, 555
 Exchange Place.. 1849, 348; 1850, 444; 1852, 405; 1866, 535
 Excise, Rates of, etc..... 1845, 354, 355, 359; 1850, 492
 Excise Moneys, 1654..... 1845, 351
 Excise Moneys, Application of, 1774..... 1851, 392
 Excise Moneys Dispute, 1653..... 1845, 369-70
 Excise, Farming Out..... 1845, 335; 1849, 346
 Excise Duty, List of Persons Who Have Paid,
 1776..... 1857, 563
 Excise, Payment Abolished..... 1845, 332
 Executions of Persons Engaged in Negro Plot,
 1741..... 1866, 810
 Expenses of the Government, 1774..... 1851, 393
 Exports and Imports, 1678-1789..... 1849, 340
 Export Duties on Peltries, 1647..... 1844, 295
 Extracts from Dunlap's History..... 1852, 407

Fair or Market..... 1844, 311
 Farmer, Property of a, in 1770..... 1858, 524
 Farm Map, Key to..... 1853, 436
 Farm Map, Description of (Old Estates)..... 1852, 462
 Farm Produce, Prices Fixed for..... 1863, 651, 671
 Fasting, Day of, for Revolution in Scotland, 1745 1865, 794
 Fast and Thanksgiving, 1655, Proclamation..... 1849, 391
 Fast and Thanksgiving, 1691, Proclamation..... 1849, 428
 Fauconier, Peter..... 1864, 581
 Federal Hall..... 1849, 334; 1864, 553
 Federal Procession..... 1856, 570; 1868, 847
 Female Samson, Mrs. Dugee, 1753 1868, 897
 Fenced, Gardens, etc., Ordered to Be, 1647..... 1844, 295
 Ferry, Old..... 1856, 467
 Ferry, 1674-75 1849, 347
 Ferry Ordinances, 1654..... 1848, 385
 Ferry Rates Fixed for Freight, 1779..... 1863, 667
 Ferry to Long Island..... 1844, 381; 1862, 542; 1869, 859
 Ferry to Long Island, Petition for, 1708.... 1851, 403, 405
 Ferry to Long Island, Protest against, 1708..... 1851, 404
 Ferry, Long Island, Question..... 1855, 557
 Ferry, Paulus Hook..... 1862, 545
 Ferry across Harlem River, 1667..... 1849, 362
 Ferry, Sale of, 1747..... 1865, 820
 Ferries, 1806..... 1857, 419
 Ferries, 1857..... 1857, 433
 Ferries on North River..... 1862, 546
 Ferries to Staten Island, 1753..... 1868, 888

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Ferryboats, Steam..... 1859, 603
 Festival of Bacchus and Shrove-tide..... 1845, 355
 Fever and Ague..... 1869, 840
 Field Street, 1677..... 1848, 398
 Finances, 1857..... 1857, 439
 Finances, City, 1653..... 1845, 347-8
 Finances, City, Disputes about, 1655..... 1847, 374-6
 Finance Department, 1857..... 1857, 447
 Financial History of New York 1859, 496
 Fires in New York, Great..... 1801, 694
 Fires in New York, Great, 1776 and 1778..... 1866, 766
 Fires in New York, Great, 1776..... 1869, 861
 Fires in New York, Great, 1776, Mr. Grim's Ac-
 count..... 1852, 435
 Fires in New York, Great, 1778, Mr. Grim's Ac-
 count..... 1852, 437
 Fires in New York, Great, 1804..... 1853, 467
 Fire-bucket Ordinances, 1693..... 1844, 318
 Fire Companies, 1781..... 1863, 713
 Fire Companies, "Heart in Hand," 1781..... 1862, 674
 Fire Department, Origin of..... 1856, 521
 Fire Department, First Organization of..... 1851, 361
 Fire Department, Papers Relating to... 1862, 661; 1866, 789
 Fire Department, Suggestions to, 1753..... 1869, 893
 Fire Department, 1806..... 1857, 422
 Fire Department, 1857..... 1857, 438, 446
 Fire Engine, First, 1732..... 1869, 851
 Fire Limits, Great Petition against, 1774..... 1850, 427
 Firemen, List of, 1762..... 1862, 669
 Firemen, List of, 1776..... 1860, 628
 Firemen, 1793-96..... 1866, 791
 Fire Office, Plan for a Public, 1774..... 1862, 670
 Fireplace Furniture..... 1858, 502
 Firewood, 1777..... 1863, 648, 652
 Firewood £5 per Cord, 1778..... 1863, 603
 Firewood, Scarcity of, 1779..... 1863, 687
 Firewood, Villages Required to Furnish, 1780... 1863, 697
 Fiscal Requests to Separate His Office from That
 of Schout, 1654..... 1845, 350
 Fiscal Department, 1857..... 1857, 442
 Fish to be Taken by Angle only, 1734..... 1856, 427
 Fitzroy, Lord, Gold Box for..... 1844, 323
 Fitzroy Road..... 1856, 466
 Flags Which Have Waved over the City..... 1863, 835
 Fletcher, Benjamin..... 1864, 581
 Fly Market..... 1857, 543
 Fly Market, Bell Taken Down and Restored, 1783 1870, 821

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Fly Market Butchers..... 1868, 841
 Forage, Prices for, 1777..... 1863, 642
 Foreign Population, Increase of, 1807..... 1859, 572
 Fort, The..... 1849, 338; 1850, 421; 1851, 364; 1869, 749
 Fort, The, under Dougan..... 1864, 636
 Fort, The, Dutch Capture, 1673..... 1864, 632
 Fort, The, Description of, 1688..... 1864, 636
 Fort, The, History of..... 1864, 624
 Fort, The, Title of Land for..... 1864, 644
 Fort, The, Clearing Houses from under, 1673..... 1850, 511
 Fort, The, Left Filthy by Departing Soldiers, 1746 1865, 797
 Fort, The, and Battery, 1789..... 1856, 518
 Forts in the Province, 1774..... 1851, 389
 Forts, Demolition of, after 1783..... 1868, 874
 Forts, Demolition of, 1804..... 1868, 875
 Forts, Construction of Regular, 1806 et seq..... 1868, 876
 Fortifications..... 1845, 340, 343, 357, 363, 370; 1849, 340
 Fortifications, City..... 1862, 519
 Fortifications, City, Condition of, 1688..... 1855, 551
 Fortifications, City, Debt for, 1654..... 1845, 351
 Fortifications, City, Damage by Hogs.....
 1844, 302, 306; 1845, 347, 349; 1850, 495
 Fortifications, Rebuilding, 1673..... 1850, 495
 Fortifications, Provisioning, 1653..... 1845, 346
 Fortifications, City Refuses to Contribute for Repairs,..... 1845, 369; 1848, 406
 Fortifications at the Close of 1808..... 1868, 879
 Fortifications, 1812, Locations of..... 1864, 852
 Fortifying New York, 1714-56..... 1868, 868
 Francis, Dr., Discourse, Nov. 15, 1857..... 1858, 600
 Franklin, Benjamin, in New York..... 1850, 417
 Fraunces' Tavern..... 1854, 547
 Free Academy, New York..... 1856, 557
 Free Masons..... 1865, 737, 741; 1868, 889
 Freemen, Citizens Admitted as, 1749 to Revolution..... 1856, 477
 French, Philip..... 1853, 400; 1864, 581
 Fresh Water Pond..... 1856, 434, 436, 439; 1860, 562
 Fresh Water Pond, Claim to, Purchased, 1791..... 1856, 434
 Fresh Water Pond, Dock in, Proposed in 1796..... 1856, 436
 Fresh Water Pond, Encroachments on, 1787..... 1856, 434
 Fresh Water Pond Staked, 1792..... 1856, 435
 Fresh Water Killetje..... 1866, 611
 Front Street..... 1851, 359
 Fulton, Robert, Memoir..... 1866, 727
 Fulton Steamboat, 1807-08..... 1870, 866
 Fulton Street..... 1852, 406

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

"Funeral Inviter" Appointed, 1691..... 1848, 404, 405
 Furniture in New Amsterdam..... 1858, 511
 Furniture of House in 1750..... 1858, 521
 Furniture, etc., of a Literary Gentleman..... 1855, 543
 Furniture, etc., in Gov. Montgomerie's House. 1858, 517
 Furniture, etc., in Philipse House 1858, 519
 Furniture in the Van Danis' House 1858, 520
 Furniture of Cornelius Steenwyck..... 1855, 543

Gabry, Timotheus..... 1852, 396
 Gage, General..... 1869, 766
 Garrison Orders, 1781 (Fire Duty)..... 1862, 676
 Gallows..... 1866, 600, 606
 Gallows Removed from Common to near Five
 Points, 1756..... 1856, 428
 Genealogy of a Jacobite..... 1862, 704
 General Sessions Court 1859, 490, 491
 Geographical and Statistical Society, American.. 1856, 567
 German Settlements. 1866, 654
 Gibbet Island (Ellis)..... 1855, 498
 Gibbons, Thomas, Butcher..... 1868, 854
 Girls, Pretty, in New York, 1807-08 1870, 859
 Glean, Anthony, Revolutionary Soldier..... 1870, 840
 Gaol, New (Hall of Records), Building of, 1757.. 1856, 428
 Goffe, Colonel William, Plan for Seizing..... 1858, 643
 Gold Box for Lord Fitzroy, Bill for, 1732..... 1844, 323
 Gold Street..... 1852, 406
 Golden Hill..... 1856, 467
 Goods not to be Carried into Interior, 1647..... 1844, 294
 Goose-riding Prohibited, 1654..... 1845, 355
 Gordon, Rev. Patrick..... 1864, 582
 Governeur, Abraham..... 1864, 582
 Government of New York, Concise History of... 1854, 537
 Government, Early Municipal Privileges..... 1860, 597
 Government, First Application for a Municipal,
 1649..... 1851, 407
 Government, Provisional Order for a, 1650 1851, 409
 Government of New York Like That of Amster-
 dam..... 1851, 364
 Government, First Municipal, 1653..... 1857, 416
 Government of New York about 1670..... 1849, 375
 Government and Constitution, 1774..... 1851, 378
 Government, City, 1857..... 1857, 441
 Government, County, 1806..... 1857, 425
 Government, List of Members of, 1653-1854..... 1854, 400
 Government House..... 1848, 371
 Governor's Island 1851, 369; 1855, 497

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Governor's Island Ceded by Indians, 1637.....	1847, 346
Grace Church.....	1865, 517, 651
Grafton, Duke of, Son of, Arrives in New York 1732.....	1864, 696
Graham, James.....	1864, 582
Gramercy (Crimmashie)	1856, 465
Grants of Land.....	1847, 348
Grant of Land, 1641, Laurens Cornelissen.....	1854, 558
Grant of Land, 1641, Lamb. H. Mott.....	1854, 558
Grant of Land, 1642, Corn. Lamb. Cole	1854, 559
Grants to Duke of York.....	1857, 416
Grants below Wall Street (of Village Lots, etc.)	
Graveyard, Old, of New Amsterdam.....	1857, 495, 498
Great Barn Island (Ward's)	1856, 444
Great Kill, The	1855, 495
Great Meadow.....	1856, 473
Great Meadow.....	1856, 476
Green Hill.....	1856, 471
Greenwich Road.....	1862, 519
Greveraat, Isaac.....	1852, 385
Greveraat, Lysbet.....	1855, 538
Grim's Memorandum of Old New York.....	1855, 584
Gunpowder Proclamation Forbidding Exporta- tion, 1774.....	1865, 760
Gunpowder Treason Celebration, Expenses for 1733.....	1844, 323
Hall, Ralph and Mary, Trial for Witchcraft, 1665	1853, 445
Hallam, Lewis, Actor, 1753.....	1868, 898
Hallam, William, Actor, 1753.....	1868, 889
Hamilton, Alexander, First Speech of	1855, 464
Hamilton, Alexander, Inquest on Body of.....	1865, 711
Handbills Relating to Revolution.....	1855, 482
Hanover Square, 1806.....	1857, 424
Hanover Street.....	1852, 404
Hard Times in New York, 1735.....	1869, 851
Hardenbrook, Margaret.....	1855, 518
Hardy, Sir Charles.....	1864, 583
Harlem, First Establishment of the Village of.....	1863, 610
Harlem Bridge, 1774.....	1856, 518
Harlem, Dutch Records of, 1675.....	1848, 387
Harlem, List of Freeholders and Inhabitants, 1713	1848, 386
Harlem, Magistrates for, 1673.....	1880, 490
Harlem Night Watch, 1675.....	1848, 387
Harlem, Road to	1862, 517; 1869, 857
Harlem Heights, Battle of.....	1868, 804
Harrison, Francis	1864, 583

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Harrison, Kath., Trial for Witchcraft, 1665..... 1853, 447
 Hazzard House..... 1859, 599
 Heathcote, Caleb..... 1853, 403; 1864, 665
 Health, Board of, 1857..... 1857, 441, 444
 Heere Graft..... 1848, 397, 400; 1862, 513
 Hell Gate Rocks..... 1864, 852
 Hendricks, Geesie..... 1855, 534
 Herdsman for Hogs to be Provided by City, 1653 1845, 347
 Hessian Deserters Hanged in Effigy, 1781..... 1863, 717
 Hessian Deserters Pardoned, 1783..... 1870, 784
 Hicks, Whitehead..... 1853, 409; 1864, 584
 Highways and Fences, Instructions for Overseer
 of, 1673..... 1850, 513
 Historical Society, New York..... 1856, 551
 Hoare, John, Pirate, 1698..... 1857, 464
 Hogs Damage Fort..... 1844, 302, 306; 1845, 347, 349
 Hogs not to be at Large..... 1844, 299; 1845, 349
 Hogs, Herdsman for, 1653..... 1845, 347
 Hogs Root in Churchyard..... 1852, 474
 Holidays in Old New York..... 1845, 339
 Holidays, Official, 1776..... 1869, 794
 Holland, Edward..... 1853, 409; 1864, 584
 Honan, David..... 1864, 584
 Hone, Philip..... 1853, 423; 1863, 627
 Hoaghlandt, Christopher..... 1852, 397
 Horen Hook..... 1856, 465
 "Hope," Confiscation of The, as a Prize, 1666.. 1847, 351-3
 Horses..... 1844, 311; 1858, 504
 Horse Races..... 1864, 737; 1865, 817; 1866, 685; 1868, 886
 Horse Thief, Reward for Sol. Jennings, 1730..... 1864, 677
 Horsemanden, Daniel..... 1864, 585
 Hospital, New York..... 1856, 431; 1862, 553; 1865, 576
 Hospital, New York, Library of..... 1865, 563
 Houses, Dwelling..... 1857, 436
 Houses, One of the Oldest in the City..... 1855, 593
 House, Old, at 40 Cherry Street..... 1855, 593
 House, Old, at Corner Chatham and Doyer Streets 1860, 627
 House, Old, in Water Street, between DePeyster
 and Pine Streets..... 1857, 529
 Houses, Old, in William Street..... 1861, 639
 Houses, Number of, and of Blocks in City, Ex-
 cepting 12th Ward, 1854..... 1854, 557
 Houses, List of, Valued at £2000 and over, 1799.. 1869, 863
 House of Refuge 1857, 451; 1859, 578; 1864, 751; 1865, 654
 Hotels, 1857..... 1857, 436
 Howe, Sir William..... 1864, 585
 Hudson, Henry, Account of Discovery by..... 1848, 372

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Hudson, Henry, Arrival at Sandy Hook.....	1852, 461
Hudson River Closed by Ice, 1780.....	1853, 464
Hudson River and Erie Canal	1858, 621
Hudson River, Vessels Navigating, in 1684.....	1866, 787
Hugginiana.....	1870, 920
Huguenot Settlers in New York and Vicinity	1862, 743
Hungerford, Ducey.....	1864, 585
Hunter, Robert.....	1864, 586
 Illumination of City for Surrender of Louisburg, 1745.....	1865, 781
Imports and Exports, 1678-1789.....	1849, 340
Impressment of Sailors, 1779.....	1870, 880
Inclenburg	1856, 468
Income and Expenditures of Old New York.....	1859, 498
"Independent Foot Company," Battalion of, 1775	1849, 344
Ingoldsby, Richard.....	1864, 586
Indians, Battles with.....	1852, 469
Indians, Declaration of War against, 1643.....	1863, 538
Indians, Habits of.....	1852, 401
Indians, Manners and Customs of.....	1858, 591
Indians, Not to Harbor, 1686	1848, 404
Indians, Number of, and How Inclined, 1774..	1851, 389-90
Indians, Rewards for Heads of, 1641.....	1863, 537
Indians, Selling Liquor to, 1647.....	1844, 295
Indians to be Paid for Work, 1648.....	1844, 301
Indian Tradition of First Landing of Europeans..	1851, 462
Indian Troubles.....	1844, 310; 1863, 550
Indian Wars in New Amsterdam.....	1863, 533
Indian Deeds.....	1849, 432-3; 1850, 539; 1869, 881
Indian Deeds for Part of Brooklyn.....	1847, 342
Indian Deeds for Hoboca, 1630.....	1849, 431
Inhabitants Fifty Years Ago (1806).....	1857, 427
Inhabitants and Slaves, List of, 1712 and 1731	1849, 360, 361
Island, The (Manhattan).....	1857, 415
Insurance Companies	1866, 569
Instructions for Overseers of Fences and Highways, 1673.....	1850, 513
Islands in the East River Ceded by Indians, 1637	1847, 347
Islands in the East River and Harbor, Historical Sketch of	1855, 493
 Jacobite, Genealogy of a.....	1862, 704
Jacob's Well.....	1856, 471
Jail.....	1862, 553
Jail, New (Hall of Records).....	1855, 473, 483

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Jamison, David	1864, 587
Janeway's Farm on Chatham Street, 1765	1856, 430
Jans, Annetje.....	1855, 531
Jans, Old, Land	1870, 922
Jansen, Johannes.....	1853, 405
Jauncey, James.....	1864, 587
Jay, Sir James.....	1864, 588
Jay, John, LL. D.	1864, 588
Jay, John, Freedom of City to.....	1845, 323
Jews Expelled, 1655.....	1849, 387
Jews' Burial Ground	1866, 515
Jewish Worship not Permitted, 1685.....	1848, 404
John Street.....	1849, 352; 1850, 448; 1852, 406
Johnston, John.....	1853, 404
Johnston, John, Dr.....	1864, 588
Johnson, Samuel D.....	1864, 588
Jones Hill.....	1856, 472
Jones, Samuel.....	1864, 589
Jones, Thomas.....	1864, 589
Jorisen, Sara.....	1855, 530
Judiciary.....	1857, 425, 443
Justice, "Little Bench of," 1654.....	1845, 356
Justice, "Small Bench" Repaired, 1654.....	1845, 355
Jurisprudence, 1857.....	1857, 453
Kalckhook.....	1860, 550, 562; 1865, 572, 580
Kalckhook, Value of Land at, 1769.....	1856, 431
Kean's Benefit, 1750.....	1866, 659
Kean Leaves the Stage, 1751.....	1866, 675
Keating's Store, Corner Peck Slip and Water Street.....	1857, 515
Kemble, Samuel.....	1864, 590
Kempe, John T.....	1864, 589
Kempe, William.....	1864, 590
Kennedy, Archibald	1864, 590
Kennedy, Captain Archibald	1864, 590
Kerfbyle, Joannes.....	1864, 590
Keys of Houses Occupied by British to be Delivered, 1783.....	1870, 782
Kidd, Captain Wm. (Pirate) 1857, 470; 1864, 591; 1869, 857	1858, 514
Kidd, Captain William, House of.....	1847, 350
Kidd, Captain William, Marriage License.....	1851, 369
Kieft Arrives.....	1866, 677
Kierstedt, Dr., Died, 1751.....	1855, 526
Kill Where Water is Running over the Stones.....	1856, 473
Kill Where the Tree Lies over the Water.....	1856, 473

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

King's Arms Tavern	1854, 442
King's Bridge Road.....	1862, 518
King's College	1849, 338
King's Farm, 1761.....	1856, 429
Kingston's Land, John.....	1860, 554
Kip, Hendrick.....	1852, 389
Kip, Jacob.....	1860, 608
Kip, Rachel	1855, 534
Kip's Farm.....	1858, 600
Kip's Mansion.....	1852, 472
Kissing Bridge.....	1866, 612
Knockers Stolen from Doors, £60 Reward.....	1866, 627
Kolck.....	1860, 562
Krigier, Martin	1852, 386
Kuyter, Joch., Piet	1852, 384
Kuyter, Madam.....	1855, 524

Lafayette, Freedom of the City to.....	1845, 326
Laendert's Farm.....	1860, 559
Lamb, John.....	1864, 745
Landais, De, Admiral.....	1870, 910
Lands, Disposition of, in Olden Times, 1638-49.....	1851, 464
Lands, State of, in Province, 1732.....	1851, 454
Lands, Titles under Which, Are Held, 1774.....	1851, 378
Laslaes Plantation	1856, 469
Latham, John.....	1864, 591
Law Department, 1857.....	1857, 449
Law Institute, New York.....	1856, 558
Law Case, Singular, 1804.....	1866, 746
Law Suits, Early.....	1848, 376
Laws, Criminal, in New Amsterdam.....	1861, 533
Law and Lawyers in New Amsterdam.....	1863, 569
Lawyers Disbarred (J. A. and Wm Smith), 1735.....	1864, 717
Lawrence, John.....	1853, 383; 1864, 591, 593
Leake, Robert.....	1861, 623
"Leander," British Man-of-War.....	1860, 620
Lee, Gideon.....	1853, 425; 1863, 629
Lee, William, Actor, 1753	1868, 890
Leete, Samuel.....	1864, 592
Leisler, Elsie, Wife of Jacob.....	1860, 594
Leisler, Jacob.....	1864, 592; 1869, 738
Leisler Estate	1860, 543
Leisler Grave.....	1856, 439; 1866, 597
Leisler Family, Marriages in.....	1869, 747
Leisler Troubles.....	1869, 741
Leisler and Anti-Leisler, 1701	1857, 515

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Letter Sent by Burgomasters to West India Co.,
 1664..... 1860, 592

Lewis, Francis..... 1864, 593

Lewis, Thomas..... 1864, 593

Liberty Poles..... 1855, 444, 451, 488

Liberty Poles, Destruction of..... 1855, 450

Liberty Poles, Citizens Desire to Erect a, 1770.. 1852, 435

Liberty Street.. 1849, 351; 1850, 447; 1852, 406; 1860, 533

Library, City, City Hall..... 1856, 568

Library, City, Books Let Out for Hire, 1765.... 1853, 464-5

Library, City, Books Loaned, 1746..... 1865, 803, 808

Library, Printers' Free 1856, 565

Library, First Public, 1729..... 1869, 853

Library, Public, 1807-08..... 1870, 855

Library, Public, of New York..... 1856, 541

Libraries Pillaged, 1777..... 1863, 636, 639

Libraries, Recapitulation..... 1856, 569

Lichtenstein, Jan Max..... 1870, 912

Lighting the City..... 1847, 385

Lighting by Gas..... 1857, 435

Lindsay, John..... 1864, 593

Ling, Matthew..... 1864, 594

Linn's Sermon on Washington, Extracts from.... 1869, 790

Liquors, Fixing Prices for..... 1845, 333

Liquors, List of Retailers of, 1776..... 1857, 556

Liquors, Selling to Indians..... 1844, 295; 1845, 363

Liquors, Selling to Indians or Slaves, 1691..... 1848, 405

Liquor Sellers to Keep Lodgings..... 1845, 332

Liquor Sellers, Fixing Number of..... 1845, 333

Lispenard, Anthony

Lispenard Meadows..... 1856, 442

List of Contributors to Putting City into a State of
 Defense, 1653..... 1845, 340

List of Maps and Illustrations..... 1857, 565; 1863, 839

Litschae, Anneken

Livingston, Edward..... 1853, 414; 1861, 550

Livingston, Philip..... 1864, 594

Livingston, Philip, Jr..... 1864, 594

Locust Trees, The..... 1856, 469

Lodowick, Charles..... 1853, 393; 1864, 595

Loockermans, Govert..... 1852, 398

Loockermans, Marretje..... 1855, 537

Looking Glasses, etc

Lorillards

Lottery for Almshouse, 1794

Lottery for a College, 1753..... 1868, 892

Lottery for Procuring Fire-buckets, 1780..... 1862, 673

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Lots Offered for Sale by City, 1691..... 1848, 406
 Loudon, Lord 1869, 767
 Love, Charles, Musician, 1753..... 1868, 890
 Love Lane 1856, 472
 Lovelace, Colonel Francis..... 1864, 595
 Lovelace, John..... 1864, 595
 Loyalist Militia, 1779..... 1863, 690
 Loyalist Soldiers, Grants to, 1777..... 1863, 640
 Loyalists, Notice to, 1783..... 1870, 788
 Lurting, Robert..... 1853, 405; 1864, 596
 Lyceum of Natural History..... 1856, 562

McDougall, General Alexander..... 1864, 596
 McDougall, General Alexander, in Jail..... 1855, 448
 Madison Avenue, View on, in 1859..... 1860, 578
 Magistrates of New Amsterdam, Biographical Sketches of..... 1852, 378
 Maiden Lane 1849, 351; 1850, 447; 1851, 360; 1852, 406; 1860, 533
 Mall, The 1856, 470
 Mammoth, The Original, 1705..... 1869, 859
 Manhattan, The Island of..... 1857, 415
 Manhattan Island, Purchase of..... 1857, 415
 Manhattan Company's Reservoir..... 1856, 437
 Manners and Customs, from Watson's Annals... 1833, 457
 Manning's Defense for Surrendering (to the Dutch), 1673..... 1852, 425
 Mans, Engiltje 1855, 521
 Manufactures and Trade of the Province..... 1852, 441
 Map of New York, 1664-88, Nicholls' 1863, 619
 Map and Survey by DeWitt..... 1849, 370
 Map of Harbor Published, 1735..... 1864, 717
 Map of Mannados or New Amsterdam, 1661, Remarks on 1859, 548
 Marine, Commercial, 1730..... 1869, 850
 Marionettes, 1747..... 1865, 816
 Market for Cattle, 1659..... 1844, 303
 Market House to be built in Broad Street, 1691.. 1848, 405
 Market Ordinances..... 1863, 714; 1848, 403, 404
 Market, Field and Broadway, 1677..... 1848, 393
 Market, Public Markets..... 1857, 419; 1862, 503
 Marketfield Street..... 1848, 399; 1849, 351; 1850, 447; 1851, 359; 1852, 405
 Marriages in Times of the Dutch, Notices of.... 1862, 762
 Marriage, Consent of Parents, 1653..... 1845, 368
 Marriage Must Follow Banns, 1658..... 1844, 302
 Marriage, Cohabitation before, Prohibited, 1658.. 1844, 303

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Marriage Contract, Decision on..... 1845, 361
 Marriage Inquiry, Van Breck-Varleth, 1654..... 1844, 306
 Marriages in the Dutch Church before the Revolution..... 1862, 556
 Marriages in the Dutch Church, 1639-88..... 1861, 640
 Marsh, The..... 1856, 475
 Marsh, David, Butcher..... 1868, 857
 Maruelt Street, 1677..... 1848, 400
 Mason, William, Pirate, 1689..... 1857, 462
 Masonic Hall..... 1865, 583, 587
 Massachusetts Bay, Claims of, 1774..... 1851, 376
 Masters of Ships to Report Passengers, 1675..... 1845, 332
 Mathematical Instrument Maker, Ant. Lamb,
 1745..... 1865, 780
 Matthews, David, Mayor, 1778..... 1853, 410; 1863, 659
 Matthews, Peter..... 1864, 596
 Mayors of the City..... 1861, 547; 1863, 624; 1869, 772
 Mayors, Sketches of, 1665, 1834..... 1853, 379
 Mayors, Duties of, 1857..... 1857, 441
 Mayor's Marshal Appointed, 1698..... 1844, 319
 Mayor's Election Disputed, 1702..... 1853, 398
 Mayor's and Alderman's Commission, 1665.....
 1851, 412; 1863, 602
 Meadows and Collect Pond..... 1860, 565; 1862, 551
 Meadows, The, or New Batavia..... 1860, 555, 559
 Meal and Slave Market, 1746..... 1862, 506
 Meat for Sale at Shambles, 1691..... 1848, 404
 Mechanics' Hall..... 1865, 555
 Mechanics, Renowned, etc., 1806..... 1857, 422
 Mechanics' Institute, Library of..... 1856, 564
 Mechanics and Tradesmen, General Society of.. 1856, 553
 Medical Science in New York, Early State of... 1849, 378
 Megalopoliensis and Driesius..... 1848, 377
 Mementos of Old New York..... 1869, 850
 Memorials of the Ancient Condition of the City.. 1852, 401
 Memorials of Returning Merchants, 1784..... 1858, 639
 Mercantile Library Association..... 1856, 548
 Mercator Chart, 1730..... 1864, 676
 Merchants' and Clerks' Library Association..... 1856, 567
 Merchants to be Citizens of New York, 1675.... 1845, 332
 Merchants' Exchange..... 1856, 515; 1866, 565; 1869, 784
 Merritt, William..... 1853, 394; 1864, 596
 Metropolitan Hotel..... 1865, 632
 Meyer, Nicholas de..... 1852, 386; 1853, 385
 Middle-Church, Bell of Old..... 1861, 575
 Milborne, Jacob..... 1864, 597
 Milborne-Leisler Marriage, 1691..... 1869, 737

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Mile = 20 Blocks.....	1864, 856
Military, 1857.....	1857, 438
Military Operations near New York, 1776, Map of	1864, 669
Military, Muster-roll of C. Steenwyck's Co., 1673	1850, 424
Military, New York Regiments (in Revolution).....	1847, 381
Military, Officers of 1st Troop of Light Horse, 1776.....	1769, 793
Military, Officers of 1st Co. of Artillery, 1776.....	1869, 793
Military, Officers of 1st Regiment Raised in New York, 1776.....	1869, 792
Militia, Number of, 1774.....	1851, 388
Militia, 1806.....	1857, 422
Militia, 1814.....	1870, 902
Militia Companies, List of.....	1852, 498
Militia Officers of Province, 1700.....	1851, 475
Militia of New York, First Gun of Continental Army	1847, 381
Mill Street Lane, 1677.....	1848, 397
Minerva Rooms.....	1865, 596
Mines, 1777.....	1851, 387
Ministers, Maintenance of.....	1844, 311
Minutes of an Old-fashioned Caucus, 1804.....	1843, 310; 1844, 291
Minvielle, Gab'l	1853, 388; 1864, 597
" Mirror, New York," Selections from.....	1844, 338
Miscellaneous Subjects.....	1853, 442
Missive from West India Co., 1654.....	1845, 366
Mitchill, Samuel Latham	1859, 538
" Mohawks " Organized	1855, 456
Mompesson, Roger.....	1864, 597
Monckton, Robert	1864, 598
Money in New Netherlands, First.....	1853, 449
Money in New York, 1777.....	1863, 641
Money, Paper, Burnt.....	1844, 321
Montagnie's Garden	1865, 548
Montgomerie, Gov. John, House of.....	1858, 517
Montgomerie, Gov. John.....	1864, 598
Montgomery, Richard, General.....	1864, 599
Montgomery, Richard, General, Monument to, 1787.....	1847, 381
Montressor, Major, before House of Commons, 1779	1870, 814
Monument Lane.....	1856, 468
Monument Road.....	1862, 519
Moody, Lady Deborah.....	1855, 520
Moore, House of Bishop.....	1854, 536
Moore, Sir Henry.....	1864, 599

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Moore, John.....	1864, 599
Moore Street.....	1852, 404
Morgan, Captain, 1665.....	1857, 457, 458
Morris, Colonel, Verses on, 1734.....	1864, 713
Morris, Lewis	1864, 599, 600
Morris, Lewis, Mrs., Dead, 1752.....	1866, 708
Morris, Lewis, Jr.....	1864, 600
Morris, Richard.....	1864, 601
Morris, Roger.....	1864, 601
Morris, Staats L.....	1864, 601
Morris Street	1852, 403
Morton, Jacob.....	1860, 610
Mostons, Thos., Pirate, 1698.....	1857, 464
Mount Pleasant.....	1856, 471
Mount Vernon Garden.....	1865, 600
Municipal Government, First, 1653.....	1857, 416
Municipal Privileges, Grants of, prior to Dougan's Charter.....	1860, 597
Murray, Joseph.....	1864, 602
Murray Street, Regulation of, 1768.....	1856, 431
Muskets with 3½-feet Barrel.....	1845, 351
Mutual Bag Association Company.....	1855, 587
 Nails Borrowed for Fortifications, 1653.....	1845, 346, 348
Names of Localities, Obsolete.....	1856, 495
" Nancy " (Tea Ship) Sent Back, 1774.....	1855, 458
Nanfan, John.....	1864, 602
Nassau Street.....	1849, 351; 1850, 447; 1852, 406
National Guard, 1857.....	1857, 439
Naturalization Act, 1744.....	1865, 757
Negro Burial Ground, near Broadway and Chambers Street.....	1856, 428, 437; 1860, 547; 1865, 567
Negro Burial Ground, Land near, 1760.....	1856, 429
Negro Executions.....	1856, 448
Negroes Confiscated by English, 1664.....	1847, 369
Negro Pot-house, 1753.....	1856, 428
Negro Plot, 1712.....	1869, 775
Negro Plot, 1740-41.....	1856, 450; 1870, 764
Negro Plot, 1741, Executions of Persons Engaged in.....	1866, 810
Negro Settlement on Bayards Mount, 1644.....	1866, 574
Nevins, John.....	1852, 383; 1860, 608
New Batavia, or The Meadows.....	1860, 555
New Netherlands, Cost of (Note)	1851, 368
Newspapers, 1806.....	1857, 421
Newspapers, 1857.....	1857, 452

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Newspaper Correspondence on Public Matters, 1704-08.....	1869, 796
Newspaper, First Daily, 1785	1869, 860
Newspaper Extracts.....	
1856, 514, 520; 1862, 695; 1864, 672; 1865, 726; 1866, 617; 1868, 884	
New Year's Celebrations, Shooting Prohibited, 1675	1845, 335
New Year's Day, 1807-08.....	1870, 865
New York Regiments (in Revolution).....	1847, 381
New York, Memorials of the Ancient Condition of the City.....	1852, 401
New York, Old, by Benjamin R. Winthrop.....	1862, 686
New York in Olden Time.....	1849, 333
New York, Town of, 1664-68.....	1863, 623
New York, 1737.....	1870, 900
New York, 1748 (by Kalm).....	1858, 526; 1869, 837
New York, 1750.....	1858, 527
New York, 1753, Advantages of.....	1869, 755
New York, 1777-83, under British Military Rule..	1863, 634
New York, 1806.....	1868, 828
New York, Fifty Years Ago (1806-07) 1858, 606;	1857, 417
New York, 1807—Fifty-two Years Ago.....	1859, 564
New York, 1807-08, by John Lambert.....	1870, 847
New York, 1808-21, North of Canal Street.....	1864, 847
New York, 1857.....	1857, 415
New York, Papers Relating to, 1776.....	1862, 652
New York City Prospectively.....	1856, 423
New York Harbor, Report of Colonel Romer on, 1700.....	1854, 555
New York, City and County of, 1857	1857, 440
Niblo's Garden, 1828.....	1865, 631
Nicholson, Francis.....	1864, 602
Nicoll, Matthias.....	1853, 383; 1864, 603
Nicoll, William.....	1864, 603
Nicolls, Richard (Gov.).....	1864, 603
Nicolls, Richard, Takes Command.....	1844, 309
Nicolls, Richard, Assumes the Government, 1674.	1845, 330
Nicolls, Richard, Answers Several Queries, 1678.	1851, 451
Nicolls' Map of Manhattan Island, 1664-88.....	1863, 619
Night Watch, 1675, Orders, etc., for.....	1845, 333
Noell, Thomas.....	1853, 397; 1864, 604
Noell, Thomas, Journal of, 1701	1857, 515
North River Travel, Reminiscences of.....	1852, 438
North River Shore, Improvement of.....	1862, 547
Nortwick.....	1856, 472
Nut Island Ceded by Indians, 1637.....	1847, 346
Nutten Island.....	1849, 367

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Oath of Allegiance to be Taken, 1675.....	1845, 331
Oaths Administered to City Officers, 1703.....	1847, 380
Oath of Common Council, 1683.....	1844, 317
Oath of Fidelity, 1673.....	1850, 499
Obsolete Names of Localities.....	1856, 465
Officers of City, Order Directing Appointment of, 1652.....	1851, 410
Officers of City, Warrant Appointing, 1675.....	1844, 309
Officers of City, 1673.....	1850, 421
Officers of Province (Civil), 1774.....	1851, 393-6
Officers of City and County, 1806.....	1857, 423
Officers of State, 1806 (in City).....	1857, 423
Officers of U. S., 1806 (in N. Y. City).....	1857, 423
Olden Time in New York.....	1848, 372: 1849, 336
Old Man's Swamp	1860, 545
Old New York, by Benjamin R. Winthrop.....	1862, 686
Old Wreck Brook.....	1856, 473
Ordinances of the Director General, etc., of the New Netherlands.....	1861, 669
Ordinances, etc., of the New Netherlands.....	1844, 293
Ordinances, Publication of, 1654.....	1845, 358
Ordinances, 1683, after Dougan's Charter.....	1858, 544
Ordinances, 1684.....	1848, 402-3
Ordinances, Digest of, during First English Pos- session.....	1858, 541
Ordinances, Digest of, during Second Dutch Pos- session.....	1858, 543
Ordinances, Digest of, prior to Revolution.....	1858, 531
Orphan (Half) Asylum (Protestant).....	1859, 580
Orphans and Orphan Masters, 1653.....	1845, 353
Osborne, Sir Danvers, Gov.....	1864, 604: 1868, 900-1
Otter's Spoor, The	1856, 473
Ould Kill.....	1856, 467
Overseer of Fences and Highways, Instructions for, 1673.....	1850, 513
Oyster (Ellis) Island.....	1855, 498
Oyster Pastie.....	1856, 471
Oyster Pastie Battery, 1751.....	1869, 851
Oyster War, 1736.....	1862, 708
packets to England, 1817.....	1858, 629
Paine, Tom, Recollections of.....	1864, 838
Paine, Tom, Residence of.....	1864, 841, 848
Paisley.....	1863, 631
Palisades (Stockade) 1845, 342-4: 1858, 541; 1866, 537, 538	1858, 541; 1866, 537, 538
Palmer, Thomas.....	1864, 605
Palmo's Café.....	1865, 572

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Pannebacker's Bouwery..... 1856, 469; 1860, 558
 Panther in New York, 1732..... 1864, 693
 Paper Money Burnt, 1796..... 1844, 321
 Parade..... 1856, 466
 Park, The (City Hall)..... 1849, 352; 1850, 448; 1855, 555
 Park, The, Claimant for 1785..... 1856, 433
 Park, The, Inclosing..... 1856, 433, 435
 Park, The, Iron Railing around 1849, 434
 Park, The, Improving..... 1856, 434
 Park, The, and Vicinity, by H. B. Dawson..... 1855, 433
 Park, The, and Neighborhood in Former Times.. 1856, 426
 Park, The, Collect, Swamp, Broadway, etc., Progress of..... 1856, 432
 Park Place (Robinson Street), Regulation of, 1773 1856, 431
 Park Row and Chatham Street..... 1866, 590
 Park Theater..... 1866, 593
 Parmiter, Paroculus..... 1864, 605
 Patroons, The First..... 1851, 365
 Paulding, William..... 1853, 421; 1863, 626
 Pauperism, Society for the Prevention of, 1818... 1858, 625
 Pavements, First, 1658..... 1857, 416
 Peace between Holland and England Proclaimed.. 1845, 365
 Peace Proclamation Read at City Hall, 1783..... 1870, 774
 Peace Celebration, Fireworks at, 1783..... 1870, 833
 Pearl Street.... 1849, 347; 1850, 444; 1851, 358; 1852, 405
 Peartree, William..... 1853, 401; 1864, 605
 Pell, John, Butcher..... 1868, 852
 Pell's Neck, Indians to be Removed from..... 1844, 310
 Penalties for Refusing Office, 1683..... 1844, 317
 Perin, John, Sr., Butcher 1868, 851
 Perin, John, Jr., Butcher..... 1868, 851
 Perro's Land..... 1860, 554
 Peruke-maker, 1750..... 1866, 636, 638, 644
 Pessenger, John, Butcher..... 1868, 843
 Peters, Hielke..... 1855, 517
 Petersen, Captain, 1688..... 1857, 461
 Petition for Charter, 1683..... 1844, 311
 Petition for Return of Confiscated Negroes..... 1847, 369
 Philipe, Adolphus..... 1864, 606; 1866, 619
 Philipe, Annetje..... 1855, 525
 Philipe, Frederick..... 1864, 605, 606
 Philipe, Frederick, Owns Contraband Goods..... 1857, 464
 Philipe, Miss, Epitaph, 1752..... 1866, 715
 Philipe House, Contents of..... 1858, 519
 Physicians, 1806 1857, 423
 Physicians and Surgeons, College of..... 1856, 565
 Pictures and Engravings..... 1858, 500

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Pie Woman's Lane	1856, 471
Pierce, John, Killed by British Ship "Leander" in New York in 1806.....	1860, 620
Pigeons, Wild, 1759.....	1869, 852
Pillory and Cage, 1764.....	1869, 852
Pillory, Stocks, etc., Location of.....	1847, 386; 1848, 406
Piracy Favored by Governor's Council, 1698.....	1857, 469
Pirates Captured, 1723.....	1869, 859
Pirates and Privateers, 1723.....	1869, 853
Pitt, Statue of.....	1862, 657; 1866, 569
Pinborne, William.....	1864, 606
Pine Street.....	1852, 406
Pintard, John.....	1860, 610; 1866, 716
Pintard, John, Memorabilia by the Late.....	1860, 620
Plain, The.....	1856, 474
Plowman, Matthew.....	1864, 607
Police.....	1857, 435
Police Department, 1857.....	1857, 446
Police and Watch Regulations, 1676.....	1867, 854
Political Disputes of the Year, 1701.....	1857, 515
Political History of New York.....	1854, 446
Poor, Providing for.....	1848, 406; 1862, 551
Poor, Constable to Collect for, 1690.....	1848, 404
Poor, History of the, in New York, 1699-1816.....	1862, 658
Poor House Burial Ground, 1757.....	1856, 428
Population of New York (at various times).....	
1849, 339; 1851, 352, 357, 387; 1854, 369	
Population of New York, Calculated, 1805-1900..	1854, 552
Porter's Instructions for Beer- and Weigh-house, 1605.....	1852, 476
Post, Jotham, Butcher.....	1868, 847
Post, Monthly, to Boston, 1672.....	1857, 542
Post Office, 1753.....	1868, 893
Post Office, 1807.....	1858, 630
Postmaster, Instructions for, 1672.....	1857, 543
Postmaster, Oath of.....	1857, 544
Potter, Elizabeth de.....	1855, 535
Potter's Field.....	1856, 465, 469; 1865, 653
Pound Regulations, 1673.....	1850, 514
Pounding Cattle, etc., 1647.....	1844, 295
Powers, George, Sr., Butcher.....	1868, 845
Powder House on Island in Fresh Water Pond	1856, 427, 433
Pratt, Benjamin.....	1864, 607
Prayer before Meeting of Burgomasters and Schepens.....	1844, 304
Precntor and Schoolmaster, 1654	1848, 378
Presbyterian Board of Missions.....	1856, 566

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Presbyterian Church, First (in Wall Street, 1718) 1869, 860
 Presbyterians, Petition of, 1717 and 1721..... 1849, 363
 Prices in New York, 1739..... 1865, 746
 Printers' Free Library 1856, 565
 Prison, Provoost..... 1855, 473
 Prison, Provoost, List of Prisoners Confined in,
 1783..... 1868, 906
 Prisoners, Charity for, 1751..... 1866, 670-1, 693
 Prisons, British, in New York during Revolution. 1849, 372
 Prison Ships, British, at New York..... 1851, 417
 Prison Ships Martyrs, Interment of Bones of, 1808 1853, 468
 Privateers..... 1847, 362-9; 1857, 455
 Privateers, New York, 1704-1815..... 1870, 867
 Privateers, 1812-15..... 1870, 883
 Privateersmen Wanted, 1743..... 1865, 751, 763
 Proclamation Prohibiting Vessels Leaving New
 York, 1746..... 1865, 799
 Produce, Prices Fixed for Farm..... 1863, 651, 671
 Progress of the City..... 1851, 350
 Progress of the City, Chronological Sketch of the 1856, 530
 Property, Value of, in 1643-1705..... 1855, 546
 Protestants, Petition of, to William III 1855, 598
 Province of New York, Size and extent of, 1774.. 1851, 377
 Province of New York, Parts Cultivated, 1774.... 1851, 377
 Provoost, David..... 1853, 396
 Provoost, David, Jr..... 1864, 607
 Provoost, Johannes..... 1864, 607
 Provoost, William..... 1864, 607
 Provoost, Vault..... 1858, 530
 Public Buildings, 1857..... 1857, 437, 449
 Public Buildings, Ancient and Modern City Halls 1845, 336
 Public Buildings and Churches in Broadway..... 1865, 635
 Public Buildings and Churches, When Erected... 1855, 573
 Public Institutions, 1807..... 1858, 619
 Punishments..... 1847, 353-71; 1859, 490
 Punishments, Execution for Burglary, 1745..... 1865, 776
 Punishments for Fornication, 1639..... 1863, 535
 Punishments, Examination by Torture. 1849, 421; 1861, 541
 Punishments, Examination, Gantlope, Soldier to
 Run, for Pilfering..... 1847, 371
 Punishments, "Ladies of Pleasure" at Whipping
 Post, 1753..... 1868, 891
 Punishments, Negro Burnt at the Stake for Rape,
 1734..... 1862, 699; 1864, 703
 Punishments, Pillory and Cage, 1764..... 1869, 852
 Punishments, In Pillory with Cabbages on Head.. 1849, 422
 Punishments, Two Slaves Burnt at Stake, 1712... 1864, 365

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Punishments, Slaves Broken on Wheel.....	1849, 366
Punishments, Slaves Hung in Chains.....	1849, 366
Punishments, Slaves Whipped at Cart's-tail.....	1849, 365
Punishments, Scourged, Branded, and Banished, 1661.....	1849, 429
Punishments, Women, Whipped and Banished for Stealing, 1661.....	1849, 410
Punishments, Women, Sentenced to Death for Burglary, 1752.....	1866, 698
Punishments, Women, Sentenced to Death, Par- doned.....	1866, 702
Punishments, Whipping-posts, Stocks, Pillory, etc., 1764.....	1856, 430
Psalms, Tate and Brady's, Printed in New York in 1753.....	1868, 892
Psalms, Watts', Printed in New York, 1750..	1868, 891, 895
Quaker Arrives, 1674.....	1851, 440
Quakers, Petition of, 1704.....	1849, 362
Quakers, Punished for Harboring, 1674.....	1851, 442
Quarantine Proclamation, 1744.....	1865, 756
Randel's Roads of New York North of Canal Street, 1808-21.....	1864, 847
Randell's Island	1855, 493
Radcliff, Jacob.....	1853, 419; 1861, 555
Railroads, 1857.....	1857, 432
Ranelagh.....	1856, 472; 1865, 575-6
Rapelye, Joris Jans, Family Record.....	1869, 787
Rapelye, Sara.....	1855, 530; 1862, 762
Reade, Joseph.....	1864, 608
Real Estate Operations in Olden Time.....	1860, 527
Rechawan.....	1856, 475
Recollections of an Old Citizen (Peter Gassner)..	1859, 588
" Recorded for Johannes Burger ".....	1855, 597
Recorders of New York.....	1854, 438; 1859, 494
Recorders of Commission, 1683.....	1844, 316
Records of the City Abstracted (about 1797)....	1856, 437
Records of the Common Council.....	1845, 314
Records, Deeds, etc., to be Returned by the King's Officers, 1780.....	1863, 730
Rector Street.....	1852, 403
Red Sea Men.....	1857, 455
Refugees, Memorial of, to Carleton, 1783.....	1870, 806
Refugees, Contributions for, 1783.....	1870, 791
Refugees, Notice to, 1783.....	1870, 790
Register, 1857.....	1857, 443

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Register of Burgomasters and Schepens.....	1844, 304
Remarks on the Map of Mannados or New Amsterdam.....	1859, 548
Reminiscences.....	1860, 630
Reminiscences by G. C. Verplanck, 1828.....	1870, 904
Remonstrance, Proclamation Forbidding Printing of, 1747.....	1865, 819
Removal of Brick House.....	1859, 610
Repairs and Supplies Department, 1857.....	1857, 448
Revenue, Application of, 1774.....	1851, 391
Revenue of Province, 1774.....	1851, 391
Revenue, Copy of Manuscript Showing City's.....	1858, 594
Reverie of a Solitaire, Written in 1823.....	1860, 625
Revolutionary Reminiscences.....	1848, 388
Reservoir, City.....	1865, 579
Residences (Private).....	1855, 561; 1857, 419
Restoration to the English, 1674, Papers Relating to	1852, 415
Richard, Paul.....	1853, 406; 1864, 608
Richard, Paulus.....	1864, 608
Richard, Stephen.....	1864, 608
Richmond Hill House.....	1852, 467
Rickett's Amphitheater	1865, 596
" Riding the Goose " on Certain Feast Days, 1654.....	1853, 442
Riemer, Isaac de.....	1853, 397
Riemer, Margaret de.....	1855, 538
Riot, 1770.....	1855, 489
Riot after Capture by English, 1665.....	1869, 890
Riot Punished by Banishment.....	1847, 357
Rivington, James.....	1864, 608
Rivington Press, Notes Concerning the Destruction of, 1775.....	1868, 813
Roads (Randell's Recollections).....	1864, 847
Roads, Public.....	1862, 517
Roelantsen, First Schoolmaster.....	1863, 559
Roelofs, Cath.....	1855, 529
Roelof, Sara.....	1855, 530
Rogier, M. de, Sent to Plymouth.....	1851, 365
Romayne, Dr.....	1858, 604
Rombouts, Francis.....	1853, 386; 1855, 595; 1864, 609
Romer, Wolfgang William.....	1864, 609
Rope-dancer (Dugee), 1753.....	1868, 894, 897
Roosevelt Street, Canal through, 1802.....	1853, 467
Rose Hill.....	1856, 465
Rotten Road.....	1856, 470
Rott, Rev. Louis, Died, 1750.....	1860, 658
Rudyard, Thomas.....	1864, 610
Rutger's Farm on East River	1860, 556

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Rutger's Park 1856, 473
 Rutger's Female Institute 1856, 567
 Ruyven and Criege Appointed Commissioners,
 1659 1847, 345

Sack-posset, Recipe for 1862, 720
 Sailing Vessels, 1857 1857, 439
 Sailors not to be "Trusted," 1691 1848, 405
 Sailors' Snug Harbor 1856, 468; 1864, 849; 1865, 640
 St. James' Church, Hamilton Square 1870, 924
 St. Nicholas, Poem in Dutch (Translation) 1851, 450
 St. Nicholas Hotel, Site of, in 1820 1865, 623
 St. Paul's Church 1865, 536
 St. Thomas' Church 1865, 636
 Salt not to be Carried out of City, 1777 1863, 646, 649
 Sand Hill 1856, 475
 Sandy Hill 1865, 608, 639
 Sands, Comfort 1864, 610
 Sands, Juliana Elmore 1861, 629
 Santen, Lucas 1864, 610
 Sapokanican 1856, 475; 1860, 552
 Saw Mill Creek 1856, 470
 Schaap Waytie 1856, 469
 Schempos, Hill of 1856, 473
 Schepens, Instructions for Under-, 1673 1860, 604
 Schoeinge or Street on Piling Near Coenties Slip,
 1658 1862, 529
 Schout's Bouwery 1860, 558
 Schout, Instructions for, 1673 1850, 515, 523
 Schipper Louro's Point 1856, 475
 School, 1747 1865, 813
 School, Classical, 1732 1869, 857
 School, First, in City Hall 1845, 336
 School, Free, Burnt, 1750 1866, 622, 624, 625
 School, Free, No. 1, Tryon Row 1866, 604
 Schools, 1857 1857, 438
 Schools, Public, 1805-57 1858, 614
 Schools and Schoolmasters in the Time of the
 Dutch 1863, 559
 Schoolmaster, Roelantsen the First 1863, 559
 Schoolmaster, Robert Leeth, 1752 1866, 717
 Schoolmaster and Precentor, 1654 1848, 378
 School Money, Suit for 1848, 376, 380
 School, Dancing and Singing, 1806-08. 1857, 420; 1870, 864
 Schout, Request to Separate the Office from that
 of "Fiscal," 1654 1845, 350
 Schreyer's Hook 1856, 471

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Schuyler, Brandt..... 1864, 610
 Schuyler, Geertrud..... 1855, 535
 Scotch Merchants, 1648..... 1844, 300
 Scott, Captain, Threatens the Dutch, 1664..... 1864, 651
 Scott, John Morin..... 1864, 611
 Scientific and Literary Institutions, 1857..... 1857, 452
 Seal of New England, Great..... 1862, 738
 Seals of New York, Early..... 1851, 420
 Seaman, David, Butcher..... 1868, 856
 Seamen, The Cause of the..... 1859, 582
 Seamen's Friend Society, American..... 1859, 584
 Sears, Isaac..... 1864, 611
 Seawant Regulations, 1650..... 1844, 301
 Seawant, Depreciated, 1650..... 1844, 301
 Seditious Words, Punishment for, 1667..... 1847, 359
 Selyns, Henricus..... 1864, 611
 Sepulcher, Wooden, Falls Apart..... 1848, 377
 Settlement of New York..... 1851, 364
 Settlement, First, by Whites..... 1852, 402
 Settlers, Names of Some of the First..... 1853, 470
 Sexton and Dog Whipper, 1654..... 1848, 378
 Shackerly, John..... 1864, 611
 Shambles, 1691..... 1848, 404
 Sharpas, William..... 1860, 609
 Sheep Walk (T'schappe Waytie)..... 1860, 352
 Sheriff, Instructions for, 1650..... 1860, 600
 Sheriff, Instructions for, 1660..... 1851, 410
 Sheriff, Under-, Instructions for, 1673..... 1851, 414
 Sheriffs of the City..... 1854, 439; 1859, 492
 Ships, Regulations for Security of, 1782..... 1863, 720
 Ships and Vessels in Olden Times..... 1860, 570
 Shipyards..... 1857, 419, 452
 Shoemaker's Pasture..... 1856, 476; 1860, 537; 1865, 432
 Shooting Match for a Lot, 1735..... 1864, 716
 Shot, Firing, across the Narrows..... 1868, 877
 Shore Patrol, 1779..... 1863, 682
 Sickness in New York, 1731..... 1864, 684
 Sickness, Great, Caused by Impiety, 1668..... 1856, 514
 Silver Boxes for Major Cosby and Thomas Free-
 man, 1733-34..... 1844, 323
 Silverware..... 1858, 503
 Silverware under P-ss pot..... 1850, 508
 Singeron, M. de, Confectioner, 1793..... 1870, 908
 Sinking Fund, Commissioners of, 1857..... 1857, 442
 Skaats, Mr. and Mrs., 1806..... 1857, 424
 Slander Trial, 1662..... 1849, 423
 Slave Market Foot of Wall Street, 1709..... 1866, 559

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Slave and Meal Market, 1746.....	1862, 506
Slave Sold with Blacksmith Shop, 1746.....	1865, 804
Slave Ships, First, 1655.....	1863, 553
Slave with Shackles Runs Away, 1747.....	1865, 812
Slavers' Log-book, 1659	1863, 587
Slavery in New York.....	1861, 700
Slaves not to be Abroad at Night, 1731.....	1869, 853
Slaves, Number of, 1807-08.....	1870, 804
Slaves, White, sold, 1732.....	1864, 695
Slaves and Slavery in New Amsterdam.....	1858, 506
Slaves and Slave Trade in New Netherlands	1863, 581
Sloughter, Henry.....	1864, 612
" Small Change Notes " Burnt, 1796.....	1844, 321
Smallpox.....	1864, 686; 1869, 850; 1865, 788
Smith, William.....	1864, 612, 613
Smith, William, Jr.....	1864, 613
Smith Street, 1677.....	1848, 396
Smith Street Lane, 1677.....	1848, 397
Snuff-taking by Women, 1731.....	1864, 682
Social Amusements in Olden Time.....	1869, 777
Society Library, New York. 1855, 576; 1856, 545; 1865, 592	
Soil, Nature of Country and, 1774.....	1851, 371
Soldier Caught Pilfering to Run Gantlope.....	1847, 371
Soldier Condemned to Death for Desertion— Pardoned.....	1847, 359
Soldier Condemned to Death for Stealing— Pardoned.....	1847, 354-6
Soldiers, Order for Levy of, 1654.....	1845, 354
Sons of Liberty.....	1855, 446
Sons of Liberty, Riot between.....	1855, 466
South Street.....	1851, 359
South William Street.....	1852, 403, 405
Spiken Devil.....	1856, 474
Spingler Estate.....	1865, 643
Spingler Institute.....	1856, 567
Spinning-wheels.....	1858, 504
Spring Garden.....	1856, 470
Spuyten-duyvil.....	1856, 474
Stadium.....	1865, 631
Stadt Huys.....	1844, 338; 1850, 421
State of the Country, Delegates Called to Discuss, 1653.....	1845, 350
Stages, 1806.....	1857, 419
Stages to Philadelphia, 1753.....	1868, 898
Stages and Ferry to Philadelphia, 1753.....	1868, 887
Stages and Post-roads to Boston, 1697.....	1853, 456
Stamp Act in New York.....	1849, 338; 1855, 436

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Stamper of Weights and Measures, 1674..... 1851, 437
 Staples and Manufactures, 1774 1851, 386
 Staten Island Granted to Cornelis Melyn, 1640.... 1847, 348
 Staten Island Deed, 1670 1857, 544
 Staten Island, Separate Jurisdiction for..... 1844, 311
 State's Prison, Old..... 1853, 461
 Statistics, 1653-1870..... 1870, 609
 Statistics, Chronological..... 1853, 462
 Statue of King George, 1770..... 1809, 852
 Steamers, 1806-57..... 1857, 431
 Steam Frigate, A Paper Concerning First, 1814.. 1859, 502
 Steats, Samuel..... 1864, 613
 Steenwyck, Cornelis.....
 1852, 390; 1853, 381; 1855, 543; 1864, 648
 Steenwyck, Cornelis, Furniture of..... 1855, 543
 Steenwyck House..... 1864, 650
 Steenwyck, Inventory of Estate..... 1864, 662
 Steenwyck, Journal of Commission on Long
 Island Sound, 1673..... 1864, 655
 Steenwyck Orchard..... 1856, 475
 Steuben, Baron, Freedom of City to..... 1845, 328
 Stille's Bouwery..... 1856, 474
 Stockades Being Built, 1706..... 1869, 817
 Stone Street.... 1848, 400; 1849, 351; 1850, 447; 1852, 405
 Stone Bridge, Broadway and Canal Street... 1865, 604, 608
 Stone Bridge Tavern and Garden, 1812..... 1857, 542
 Stores and Storekeepers in New Amsterdam..... 1858, 507
 Strangers in Town to be Reported, 1691..... 1848, 405
 Street Department, 1857..... 1857, 448
 Streets, Early History of..... 1849, 347
 Streets, Further Account of..... 1852, 402
 Streets, Cleaning of... 1857, 421, 434; 1862, 525; 1863, 658
 Streets, Commissioner for Laying out, Remarks
 of, 1807 1866, 756
 Street Cries of New York Fifty Years Ago (1806) 1857, 429
 Street Lighting.....
 1847, 385; 1856, 516; 1857, 448; 1862, 541; 1869, 858
 Street Names, Origin and Changes of.....
 1852, 404; 1855, 499; 1869, 780
 Street Numbering, 1793..... 1856, 516
 Street, Cost of Opening, 1830-56..... 1857, 529
 Street Regulating and Paving..... 1862, 533
 Street, Reasons why They Were Built on Present
 Sites..... 1851, 358
 Street Views in New York, 1806..... 1857, 430
 Stryker, Jacob..... 1852, 395
 Stuyvesant, Gerardus..... 1864, 614

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Stuyvesant, Nich. William.....	1864, 614
Stuyvesant, Peter, and Family.....	1852, 413
Stuyvesant's Appeal to Burgomasters, 1654.....	1845, 363
Stuyvesant Appoints Ruyven and Criege Com- missioners, 1659.....	1847, 345
Stuyvesant's House	1862, 500; 1866, 579
Stuyvesant's House, Burning of	1862, 657
Stuyvesants, Letter from, 1653.....	1844, 305
Stuyvesant's Property, Map of	1862, 689
Stuyvesant Threatens to "Wash His Hands from the Calamities," etc.....	1845, 364
Sub-Treasury, 1866.....	1866, 539
Sugar House, Bayards in Wall Street.....	1866, 559
Sugar House in Liberty Street.....	1852, 414
Sugar and Candy Refinery, 1730.....	1864, 674
Summons, 1657.....	1848, 384
Sunday Laws, 1673.....	1850, 492
Sunday Observance, 1647 and 1648	1844, 293, 300; 1848, 402
Surface of Island, 1806.....	1857, 426
Survey and Maps of Sim. DeWitt	1849, 370
Survey and Laying out of Highways, 1707.....	1860, 568
Swamp, Papers Relating to.....	1854, 529
Swamp, Affidavit of George Montgomerie about..	1854, 531
Swamp, Petition of Anthony Rutgers for.....	1854, 533
Symes, Lancaster.....	1864, 614
Tabernacle, The	1865, 591
Tables, etc.....	1858, 500
Tailor, Ladies', 1735	1864, 716
Tammany Hall.....	1866, 599
Tammany Society, History of.....	1865, 849
Tanners May Dig Pits, 1745.....	1856, 427
Tap, Permission to.....	1848, 377
Tattersall's.....	1865, 628
Tavern Customs in Old New York.....	1861, 525
Taverns, Increase of, 1648.....	1844, 297
Tavern Licenses, 1778	1863, 664
Tavern Licenses Restricted to 200, 1780.....	1863, 688
Taverns, Regulations for, 1648.....	1844, 296
Tax List, 1674.....	1866, 805
Tax on Real Estate, 1654.....	1848, 379
Tax for City Defenses, 1653.....	1845, 340
Taxation in New York.....	1859, 496
Taxes, 1703.....	1849, 340
Taxes, Levying, 1655.....	1849, 390
Taxpayers and Amounts of Taxes, 1677.....	1848, 391
Tax Rates in Case of Indian War.....	1844, 311

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Tea Thrown into the Sea from the Ship "London" 1855, 458
 Tea Room, 1806. 1857, 424
 Tea Ship "Nancy" Sent Back, 1774. 1855, 458
 Tea Water Pump. 1855, 555; 1856, 438; 1866, 612
 Telegraph. 1857, 433
 Telegraph, Atlantic. 1861, 637
 Teller, Helena. 1855, 520
 Teller, William. 1864, 615
 Ten Eyck, Conraedt. 1864, 615
 Tennant, Gilbert, Sermon by, 1736. 1864, 724
 Tew, Captain Thomas, Pirate, 1694. 1857, 463
 Thanksgiving Day for British Victories, 1783. 1863, 726
 Theater, Money Raised by a Charity Performance
 Refused by Common Council, 1795. 1847, 379
 Theater, Comedians. 1865, 841; 1866, 623; 1868, 859
 Theater Performances. 1866, 628, 632, 659, 663, 665, 667, 678, 692, 695, 704
 Theater, Play, "Bateman, or the Unhappy Marriage" 1862, 735
 Theater, Play, "Conscious Lovers," 1753. 1868, 896
 Theater, Play, "Constant Couple," 1753. 1868, 899
 Theater, Play, "George Barnwell," 1753. 1868, 905
 Theater, Play, "Love for Love," 1753. 1868, 905
 Theater, Play, "Richard III," 1750. 1866, 623, 626
 Theater, Play, "The Spanish Friar," 1750. 1866, 630
 Theater, Play, "Tom Thumb the Great," 1753. 1868, 905
 Theater, Play, "Tunbridge Wells," 1753. 1868, 898
 Theater — Marionettes, 1747. 1865, 816
 Theater — "Posture" Master, 1752. 1866, 709-10
 Theater, John Tremain Leaves the Stage, 1751. 1866, 684
 Theater, Broadway. 1865, 588
 Theater, Chatham, 1822. 1866, 616
 Theater, New, in Nassau Street, 1753. 1868, 896
 Theater, Old Bowery. 1866, 583
 Theater, Olympic, 1812 and 1838. 1865, 628
 Theater, Park. 1866, 593; 1870, 849
 Theaters, 1806-07. 1857, 421; 1858, 630
 Theaters, 1857. 1857, 437
 Theft, Restitution Ordered, 1667. 1847, 356
 Theological Seminary, General. 1856, 561
 Theological Seminary Union, Library. 1856, 561
 Thompson- (Coleman) Duel, 1803. 1857, 428
 Thysen's Garden. 1856, 467
 Titles, Derivation of (opposite Blackwell's Island) 1869, 881
 Titles under Which Lands are Held, 1774. 1851, 378
 Tokens, Early New York. 1859, 596
 Tonneman, Pieter. 1852, 397

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Tontine Building.....	1852, 458
Tontine Coffee House.....	1866, 564
Tothill, Jeremiah.....	1864, 616
Trade of Province, 1774.....	1851, 383
Trade with Foreign Plantations, 1774.....	1851, 385
Trade, Illegal, Means to Prevent, 1774.....	1851, 386
Trade, Free, with Holland, 1669.....	1850, 423
Trade and Manufactures of the Province, 1705-68	1852, 441
Traders Must Be Residents.....	1844, 300
Travel between New York and Philadelphia, 1671-1813.....	1855, 571
Trespass on Orchards, etc., 1647.....	1844, 295
Trinity Church.....	1847, 349; 1865, 527; 1869, 854
Trinity Church Archives, Burning of, 1750.....	1869, 851
Trinity Church City Officers Attend, 1703.....	1847, 380
Trinity Church Robbed, 1713.....	1862, 758
Trinity Church Yard.....	1861, 622; 1862, 679; 1864, 740; 1866, 725
Trinity Church Yard, Grant for, 1702.....	1844, 320
Trumbull's Portrait of George Clinton.....	1845, 323
Trumbull's Portrait of Washington.....	1845, 320
Tryon, William, Governor.....	1864, 615
Tryon, Proclamation by, 1779.....	1870, 880
Tryon, Report of, 1774.....	1851, 371
Tudor, John.....	1864, 616
Turtle Bay (Deutel).....	1856, 473
Two Ponds, The.....	1856, 474
Tymen, Elsie	1855, 536
Union Cockade, 1783.....	1870, 822-3
Union Square.....	1857, 480
University, New York, Library.....	1856, 567
Vaccination, Proclamation Forbidding, 1747.....	1865, 813
Valuation of Property in the City, 1684.....	1848, 404
Value of Property in the City in Early Times.....	1855, 546
Van Arsdale, John, Revolutionary Soldier.....	1870, 842
Van Borsum, Annetje	1855, 519
Van Brugh, Johannes.....	1864, 616
Van Brugh, John Piet.....	1852, 381
Van Cenlen's Neck.....	1856, 475
Van Cliff's Estate.....	1860, 536
Van Cortland, Aug.....	1860, 609
Van Cortland, Cath.....	1855, 518
Van Cortland, Jacobus	1853, 402; 1864, 617
Van Cortland, Johannes	1864, 617

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Van Cortland, Oloff. Steph. 1852, 391; 1864, 616
 Van Cortland, Oloff. Steph., Madam. 1855, 524
 Van Cortland, Philip 1864, 617
 Van Cortland, Stephanus 1853, 385; 1864, 616
 Van Dam, Rip. 1864, 618; 1865, 713
 Van Dam, Rip, Contents of House of. 1858, 520
 Vandegrist, Paul L. 1852, 381
 Vanderspiegle's Daughters. 1855, 523
 Vandervin, Hend. Jansen. 1852, 398
 Van Dyck, Lydia. 1855, 529
 Vange, Maria. 1855, 523
 Van Gheel, Max. 1852, 383
 Van Hattem, Arent. 1852, 380
 Van Horne, Ab'm. 1864, 618
 Van Horne, Cornelis. 1864, 618
 Van Horne, Garret. 1864, 619
 Van Horn, Mary. 1855, 535
 Van Ness, Eliz. 1858, 517
 Van Ness, Ab'm, Residence of. 1854, 528
 Van Ruyven and Criejer, Commissions of, 1659. 1849, 430
 Van Trenhoven, Corn. 1852, 387
 Van Trenhoven Plantation. 1860, 534
 Van Twiller's Plantation. 1856, 469
 Van Voorhandt, Lysbet. 1855, 533
 Varian House. 1856, 519; 1865, 653
 Varian's Bull's Head Tavern. 1866, 581
 Varick, Richard. 1853, 413; 1861, 549
 Varleth, Judith. 1855, 532
 Vauxhall. 1856, 470
 Vauxhall Garden. 1856, 472; 1865, 627; 1866, 586
 Verplanck, Gulian, Dies Suddenly, 1751. 1866, 690
 Verplanck, Guleyn. 1864, 619
 Verplanck Mansion. 1866, 560
 Viellecour, M. de, 1829. 1870, 914
 View of New York on a Powder Horn. 1860, 591
 Verrezauss' Voyage. 1856, 503
 Vesey, Rev. William. 1847, 349; 1864, 619
 Vesey, Rev. William, Preaches before City Officers. 1844, 320; 1847, 380
 Vesey, Rev. William, Paid £5 for Corporation Sermon. 1847, 386
 Vineyard, The. 1860, 543
 Vigne, Jan. 1852, 378
 Vinje, Rachel. 1855, 537
 Visboom, Margaret. 1855, 522
 Vlattenbarck Hill. 1856, 471
 Vly, The. 1856, 470

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Votes Cast in City in 1853.....	1854, 374
Vote for Governor, 1790-1852.....	1854, 370
Waal, The	1856, 467
Wall Street.....	
1849, 353; 1850, 449; 1852, 405; 1860, 532; 1866, 542	1866, 542
Wall Street East of William Street.....	1866, 548
Wall Street, History of.....	1866, 533
Wall Street, Original Survey of North Side of, 1685.....	1851, 406
Walloons Settle on Long Island.....	1851, 365
Walls, The, 1677.....	1848, 395
Walters, Robert.....	1853, 404; 1864, 619
Walton, William	1864, 620
Walton House	1849, 331; 1858, 524
Walton House, Two Views of Interior of.....	1857, 494
War with the English, 1653-54.....	1849, 354; 1850, 450
War with the Indians, 1655-56.....	1849, 355; 1850, 451
War with the Swedes, 1655.....	1849, 355; 1850, 451
War, Battles with the Seminoles	1852, 469
War of 1812, Battles of	1852, 470
War of 1812, Brigade Orders.....	1857, 484
War of 1812, Declaration of War Read in City Hall Park.....	1855, 475
War of 1812, Detachments Stationed at Bath or New Utrecht, Long Island.....	1857, 485
War of 1812, Incidents Relating to.....	1857, 482
War of 1812, List of Hussars.....	1857, 483
War of 1812, Order Calling Militia into United States Service.....	1857, 487
War of 1812, Order of Thanks for Parade, 1814..	1857, 491
War of 1812, Tenth Regiment in United States Service.....	1857, 488
Wards, Boundaries in 1854.....	1854, 398
Wards, Division of City into Six, 1683.....	1844, 315
Ward's (Great Barn) Island	1855, 495
Wardrobe of a Fashionable Lady, 1685.....	1855, 541
Wardrobe of an Officer, 1692.....	1855, 539
Wardrobe of an Old Citizen, 1682.....	1855, 540
Wardrobe of a Professional Gentleman, 1685....	1855, 541
Warrant Appointing City Officers, 1675.....	1844, 300
Warren, Sir Peter.....	1864, 620
Warren and Robinson Streets, Regulation of, 1773	1856, 531
Washington, Address to.....	1845, 314, 318; 1870, 827
Washington, Farewell at Fraunces' Tavern	1857, 541
Washington, Letter of Thanks from.....	1845, 317, 319

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Washington Made a Citizen of New York..... 1845, 315
 Washington, Portrait by Trumbull..... 1845, 320
 Washington Hall (S. E. Corner Reade and
 Broadway)..... 1865, 568, 571
 Watch, Setting the, 1673..... 1850, 523
 Water Line, Survey of City, 1730..... 1856, 598, 599
 Water Side, 1677..... 1848, 391
 Water, Standing, in Meadows, 1798..... 1856, 437
 Water Street..... 1849, 351; 1850, 446, 1851, 359
 Water from East River for Fire Purposes, 1750.. 1866, 652
 Water Supply, before Revolution..... 1862, 554
 Water Supply, 1806..... 1857, 421
 Water Supply Chronology..... 1854, 215
 Water Supply from Bronx River Proposed, 1798
 1860, 580, 581
 Water Works, First, 1774..... 1856, 432
 Water Works Money, 1774..... 1854, 215
 Watts, John..... 1864, 620
 Wax Figures, Exhibition of, 1749..... 1865, 841
 Wealth of Citizens, Comparative, 1815 and 1820.. 1864, 755
 Wealthy Citizens, Principal, about 1795..... 1855, 565
 Weather, Cold, 1747..... 1865, 808
 Weather, Cold, 1750..... 1866, 696, 699
 Weather, Cold, 1780..... 1869, 860
 Weather, Mild, 1755..... 1869, 861
 Weaver, Thomas..... 1864, 621
 Weights and Measures, 1653..... 1845, 352
 Weights and Measures, English, Introduced..... 1844, 310
 Weights and Measures, Stamper of, 1674..... 1851, 437
 Weighing House, 1653..... 1845, 352
 Wenham, Thomas..... 1864, 621
 Wessells, Metje..... 1855, 527
 West, John..... 1860, 608; 1864, 621
 Westchester..... 1868, 818
 Westchester, Ferry to Nassau Island, 1745..... 1862, 728
 Westchester, Trial for Witchcraft at, 1670..... 1853, 447
 Westchester County, Ann Hoecks Neck..... 1844, 310
 Westchester County, Eastchester 1865, 754; 1868, 813
 Westchester County, Mamaroneck, Heathcote
 House..... 1864, 666
 Westchester County, Hadden, John and Abigail die,
 1749..... 1865, 832
 Westchester County, New Rochelle..... 1862, 752
 Westchester County, Pell's Neck, Indians to be
 Removed from 1844, 310
 Westchester County Plundered by Refugees, 1783.. 1870, 791
 Westchester County, Woman Whips a Man in, 1733..... 1864, 699

HISTORICAL INDEX COMMON COUNCIL MANUALS.

Westchester County, Yonkers, Child Drowned at, 1734.....	1864, 706
Westchester County, Yonkers, Frederick Philipse dies, 1751.....	1866, 681
West India Company, Address of Burgomasters to, 1654.....	1847, 373
West India Company, Letter from, 1654.....	1847, 373
West India Company Storehouses.....	1864, 635
Wharf, Location of, 1691.....	1848, 405
Wharfage, Rates of, 1813.....	1855, 600
Wheeler, Andrew C., Butcher.....	1868, 859
White, Henry.....	1864, 622
White Conduit House.....	1865, 599
Whitehall.....	1862, 500
Whitehall Street.....	1849, 348
Whitney, Stephen, House.....	1848, 371
Willemesen, Matilda.....	1855, 538
Willett, Marinus	1853, 416; 1861, 553
Willett, Marinus, Speech in City Hall Park, 1814	1855, 477
Willett, Richard.....	1864, 622
Willett, Thomas.....	1853, 379; 1864, 622
William Street.....	1852, 405
Williamson and Romayne, Drs.....	1858, 602
Wilson, Ebenezer.....	1853, 402; 1864, 623
Windmills... 1856, 462; 1862, 547; 1866, 603, 605; 1869, 853	
Wine and Beer Carriers, Provisional Instructions for.....	1845, 359
Winkle Street, 1677.....	1848, 400
Witchcraft Trial, Ralph and Mary Hall, 1665.....	1853, 445
Witchcraft Trial, Katharine Harrison, 1670.....	1853, 447
Wolphert's Valley.....	1856, 476
Women, Notable, of Olden Time.....	1855, 517
Woodlawn Mansion.....	1856, 514
Work House in Park.....	1866, 601, 602
Yellow Fever, 1807-08.....	1870, 856
York, Duke of, Presents a Seal, Mace, and Gown, 1669.....	1849, 343
Young Men's Christian Association.....	1856, 563
Zant Berg (Sand Hill).....	1856, 475
Zenger, John Peter.....	1864, 623, 721, 725, 727
Zenger Imprisoned, 1734.....	1862, 704
Zenger, Letter from Prison, 1734.....	1864, 711
Zenger Press to be Sold, 1751.....	1866, 680
Zenger, Proclamation against, 1734.....	1864, 708
Zenger Trial, 1735.....	1856, 452

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